PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS

Garcia deal may peril US aid; Noy wants it undone

By Nikko Dizon
Marlon Ramos
and Christine O. Avendaño

THE JUSA bargain agreement between state prosecutors and retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia that resulted in his release on Saturday despite a plunder charge against him may imperil US military aid to the Philippines, a military analyst said yesterday.

"The United States might see us as not being serious in prosecuting the case... That we didn't apply the full

SARCIA A9

'Living history' marks 75th AFP rites today

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

IF YOU have an old kit (pure or cotton) tucked away in your closet, it's time to pull it out, go to Camp Aguinaldo and start marching.

Guests at the Armed Forces of the Philippines' 75th anniversary ceremonies

LIVING A9

AZKALS' LAST STAND Indonesian striker Christian Gonzales (center) is sandwiched between Philippine players Aaron del Rosario (right) and Robert Gier during their semifinal AFF Suzuki Cup 2010 football match in Jakarta on Sunday night. Uruguay-born Gonzales fired the winning goal for Indonesia that ended the Philippines' Cinderella run. A1

Court releases Trillanes

P-Noy, BSP defend new peso bills from critics

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT Aquino and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) defended the country's new peso notes, mocked by critics for featuring error-strewn maps and apparently inventing a new palm species.

The President said he would use a map or GPS (Global Positioning System) and not the new peso bills if he were to search for a place in the Philippines.

Shrugging off the criticisms, Mr. Aquino said the new peso bills bearing his signature were not a map or a "cartographer's sketch."

"There is some degree of

P-NOY A13

'REAL MACAW' At left is the new generation P500 bill featuring the controversial parrot. At right is the blue-naped parrot (Tanygnathus lucionensis) as photographed by the Philippines' foremost bird photographer Rony Ocos in its natural habitat at the Subic rain forest on Dec. 5, 2007. The parrot measuring 330 mm in length is found in forests up to 1,800 meters in altitude. It is endemic in all major Philippines islands and in some islands off north and east Borneo. Now rare, it was once widespread and common.

Senator granted temporary liberty

By Alexis Papa
and Miko Morales

AFTER MORE than seven years in detention, Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV finally tasted freedom last night.

Trillanes walked out of the Camp Crame Custodial Center at around 9:28 p.m.

An aide of Trillanes told the Inquirer that the senator was released after the Makati City Regional Trial Court granted his petition for provisional liberty in time for the Christmas season.

The aide, who asked not to be identified because he was not authorized to talk to the media, said Trillanes was released to the custody of Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile.

Trillanes was detained in 2003 on charges of staging a coup d'etat against then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Wearing a red shirt, the color of the rebel Magdalo group of sol-

COURT A11

16 PEOPLE DEAD

Noy orders probe; fire chief axed

By Christine O. Avendaño, Alexis Papa, in Manila
and Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

PRESIDENT Aquino yesterday ordered an investigation of Sunday's fire that hit a pension house in Tagaytay City and killed 16 people, most of them nursing students about to take licensure examinations.

Acting on Mr. Aquino's order, Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo sacked Chief Insp. Nefil Cansangan, the city's fire marshal, to pave the way for the inquiry into whether the Tagaytay fire department was negligent.

The 16th fatality nursing graduate Jose Julito Goddayang, was among 19 people hospitalized for injuries sustained in the 10-hour fire. He died of asphyxia complications yesterday, authorities said.

The President said he was "piqued" when he learned about

NOY ORDERS A13

General bearing gifts visits wounded rebel

By Shiena M. Barrameda
Inquirer Southern Luzon

NAGA CITY—Jason Real, alias Ka Butch, who allegedly led Front Committee 70 of the communist New People's Army (NPA) in Sorsogon, was resting in a hospital bed and recuperating from three bullet wounds inflicted in battle when an unexpected visitor came to his isolated ward.

Maj. Gen. Rafaelito "Rafly" Bonoan, commander of the Army's 9th Infantry Division, arrived that Tuesday morning

GENERAL A14

FILM FLAP

King of comedy told to respect King of Kings

By Jocelyn R. Uy

IT MAY be the latest faux pas Rich from Dolphy, the 82-year-old King of Comedy, but Catholic Church officials and Church organizations are not laughing at some scenes in "Father Jojo-mon," which they deem offensive and disrespectful to the faith.

They have called on the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) to delete the offensive scenes or face a boycott of moviegoers. "Father Jojo-mon" is RSQ Productions' entry to the 36th Metro Manila Film Festival, which

KING A6

TELLING THE FILIPINO STORY TO THE WORLD

Editors' Note: For 25 days, we will be telling stories about the Inquirer to mark the paper's 25th anniversary on Dec. 9, 2010. Some are little-known stories that are puzzling on how we cover unfolding events; some are mark-the-day stories that become talk-of-the-town types; others are turning-point stories that have changed the landscape of history; still others, big or small, were the heart and never let go. But whatever the Inquirer will tell you the story.

Mike A sent 'Inquirer 8' to jail

By Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.
Senior Desk Editor

Chasing after Bolante story was no joy ride

By Miko Morales

I WAS PART of the "Inquirer 8"—seven editors and the publisher—detained one afternoon in March 2007 in a Manila police station on a libel charge filed by the husband of then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Until then no group of Inquirer editors had been held by the police since the newspaper was born two months before the Marcos dictatorship fell.

Detained were Inquirer Number, publisher Jose Ma. Nolasco, managing editor Abelardo Ulandey, associate editor

MIKE A A11

IT WASN'T my idea of a joy ride.

On Dec. 3, 2008, I sat at the back seat of a pickup truck, terrified as the vehicle sped about 130 kilometers per hour through the highway while chasing a convoy carrying Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante.

Bolante, 59, a former agriculture undersecretary who allegedly masterminded the distribution of P728 million in fertilizer funds for then Presi-

CHASING A14

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

2 P.M.

1st	1 9
2nd	4 4
3rd	4 23

SUERTRES

1st	7 1 7
2nd	5 8 8
3rd	8 2 3

6/55 GRAND LOTTO

2 3 21 46 50 51

P10,000,000.00

De Lima to lead witnesses to HK

By Marlon Ramos and Clarissa O. Bandalan

JUSTICE SECRETARY Leila de Lima will lead the Philippine delegation to Hong Kong that will take part in the investigation there of the Aug. 23 hostage fiasco that left eight Hong Kong tourists dead in Manila.

Speaking with reporters yesterday, De Lima said Malacañang had asked her to appear at the Hong Kong government's investigation of the hostage-taking incident.

"I received the memo from the Office of the Executive Secretary that I will be one of the government officials who will be sent to testify there," De Lima said.

She said she will leave to this decision if all the public officials requested by the Hong Kong government would actually be sent, she said.

The Hong Kong justice department has asked 11 Filipinos, most of them government officials, to testify at a public inquiry to be held in the Chinese special region.

But Presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda told reporters yesterday that because the matter may involve the country's sovereignty, among other things, President Aquino wanted the Hong Kong statements discussed thoroughly by Filipino officials first.

Lacierda said Malacañang had yet to extend the request.

The discussions will be participated in by officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs, according to Lacierda.

"We need to make sure the rights of our citizens will be protected. We have to make sure they respect the sovereignty of the Philippines. So these are the details we will discuss," he said.

Calls to Lacierda to clarify De Lima's statements were unanswered at press time.

Meanwhile, a member of the local Incident Investigation and Review Committee (IIRC) that investigated the bloody hostage-taking, welcomed the decision of the Hong Kong government to conduct its own inquiry into the incident.

Broadcaster Herman Basbaño said the IIRC had provided copies of their months-long investigation to Hong Kong officials.

"That's their prerogative. We expect that. We will share the data we gathered during our investigation," Basbaño told the Inquirer.

SC mouthpiece to Webbs: Just doing my job

By Nikko Dizon and Marlon Ramos

JUSTICE Court spokesperson Ana Maria Margaret said he was standing his ground.

The family of recently released Hubert Webb was free to criticize him for saying that the high court's decision acquitting Webb and his fellow accused in the Vizconde massacre did not mean that they were innocent of the crime, said Margaret.

"I stand my ground. If they feel that way, then they're free to feel that way. I've been spokesman for the longest time and I am just doing my job," Margaret said in a press conference sought by reporters who wanted to get his side after the Webb family's statements appeared online.

ABS-CBN online on Sunday quoted the Webb family as saying that they "deplore" the statement of Margaret that the acquittal of Webb did not mean he was innocent of the charges."

The Webbs said the "personal opinion" of Margaret was "unsolicited for" and that it was not his "place to interpret the decision of the Supreme Court."

Margaret, however, said his explanations of court decisions to reporters covering the justice beat are "based on jurisprudence" and are not his personal opinions.

Margaret said none of the Supreme Court magistrates, from Chief Justice Renato Corona to the associate justices, had called his attention to his explanations of their decisions.

"No one has called any attention—if no one among the justices, not any of the associate justices, not the Chief Justice. I am just doing my job in the best way I know how," Margaret said.

Meanwhile, Justice Secretary Leila de Lima, who has been tasked to reinvestigate the Vizconde massacre, said she wanted a "fly" that Antonio Sanchez, one of the fugitives-accused in the massacre, may not have been the name of the person who was being hunted.

Another accused, Jerry Tiñoco, also remains at large.

"I got information... just a tip, about Sanchez. His name in the (police) blotter was Antonio Sanchez. But the tip I got says his name was Conde Sanchez or Dino Sanchez. So there was a mistake," she told reporters.

De Lima yesterday met with special agents of the National Bureau of Investigation and police investigating teams tasked to handle the reinvestigation.

Since the 20-year prescription period for the prosecution of the crime refused to run recently, De Lima expressed the hope that the capital investigation could still resolve the 1991 murders.

"Our priority is to really find out the truth [and] get the real perpetrators," she said.

According to De Lima, the reinvestigation would also look into allegations that some unscrupulous NBI officials had connived with others to make up stories against PMA and its cohort.

Teachers decry delay in bonus

By Tara Quicorandes

PUBLIC SCHOOL teachers yesterday expressed disappointment over the delay in the release of their Christmas bonus of P10,000, saying that the bonuses had become an annual holiday tradition.

The government has asked them to be patient.

The Department of Education (DepEd) said the bonuses may be released before the New Year and assured the teachers the process was being expedited.

"While we appreciate the regular government for commencing the traditional granting of Christmas bonuses, we are a bit disappointed by its delay," said Benjo Benavides, Metro Manila chair of the Teachers' Dignity Coalition (TDC).

The DepEd said last week that the Christmas bonuses would be released on Dec. 15, for the almost 440,000 public school teachers nationwide.

But according to reports received by TDC, only the public teachers in Manila had so far received their bonuses as of Dec. 19.

"Teachers are reasonable expect a merry Christmas and thus anticipated an advance in case respective schools fail Dec. 15 as per DBM (Department of Budget and Management) circular 2010-3. We just hope that it would be given before Christmas eve," Benavides said.

Education Secretary Armin Luistro had asked for patience, assuring the teachers the funds for the bonuses had already been released.

"I am appealing to our dear teachers for patience while waiting for their Christmas bonus. Don't worry if there will be a slight delay it will surely come hopefully before Christmas," Luistro said.

Pagasa unveils new, improved website

By Kristine L. Mora

THE WEATHER bureau is starting the new year right.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) has unbelievable a redesign of its website that promises better access and information to the public.

The agency unveiled the new website over the weekend. Nilbarani Arevalo, Pagasa deputy administrator, told the bureau in an interview yesterday.

The old Pagasa website (pagasa.dost.gov.ph) was one of the most popular in the country, Servando said. The agency, which recently won the 2010 Digital Filipino Web Award in the government category, said the website recorded 161.2 million hits, 18.7 million page views, 111 million downloads and 6 million unique visitors from January to November this year.

Servando said the redesign was "value-added by [DOST's] Department of Science and Technology's] program to harmonize information across agencies."

Servando said the new website was a work in progress and Pagasa was eager for feedback from users. "We are still thinking of adding other features and news," he said.

While the new site has retained some old features like the daily weather outlook, temperature, gale warnings and aviation charts of the country, it has added information relevant to various sectors such as agriculture, shipping and aviation.

During extreme weather disturbances, the website will feature radar images and hourly updates on the storm, Servando said.

The website also has forecasts for seaways and boulevards. Viewers can also check the weather in other Philippine cities and Asian cities, he said.

The website also has links to other government agencies and info resources and hosting tools for students studying the weather.

Senate eyes tax break for parents of disabled

By Ed Cabacungan

THE SENATE would grant a tax reprieve to parents and legal guardians of special children to help them better cope with the financial aspect of their needs.

"Parents need to pay for specialized treatment, therapy, psychosocial, physical and speech therapies to improve the quality of life of their children," said Sen. Manuel Villar in the explanatory note to Senate Bill 2824 authored by him.

SB 2824 would provide for a P50,000 income tax deduction for persons taking care of special children as they could have more money to pay for treatments, schooling and other needs.

Children who are intellectually disabled or those with hearing, visual or orthopedic impairments, speech and language defects, serious emotional disturbances, and mental retardation require assessment by the bill. They should be under 18 years old and must be certified by medical professionals and Department of Education (DepEd) first before parents or guardians to be eligible for the tax break.

Under the bill, a parent or guardian should be responsible for more than half of the total financial needs of the special child to avail of the tax deduction.

Villar noted the bill was timely since the number of PLWpine special children jumped by 30 percent between 2004 and 2009.

He said the children needed more attention which was why the government should provide them with subsidies.

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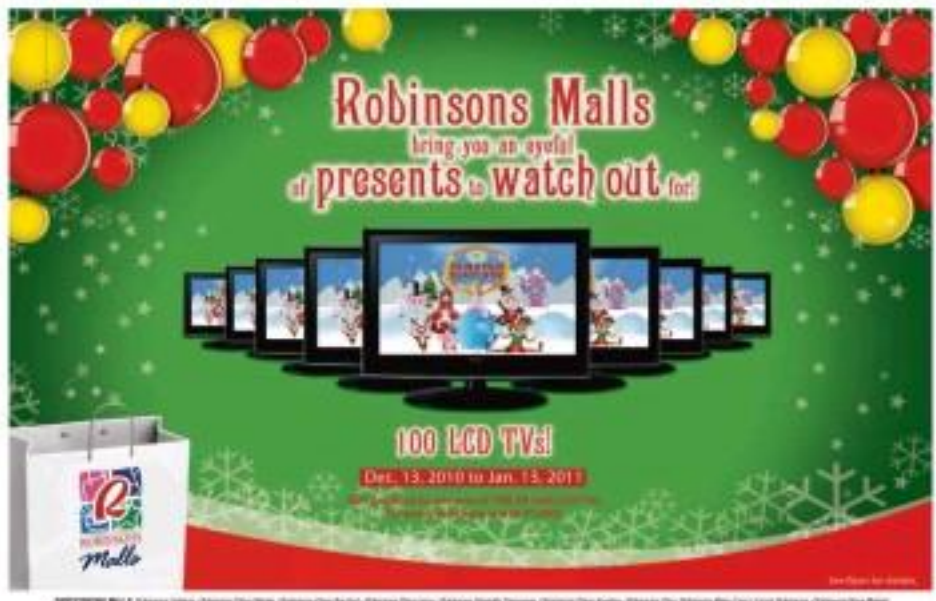

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TAP GCASH REMIT TO PAY OUT CONDITIONAL CASH GRANTS TO POOR FAMILIES

Globe GCASH

GCASH REMIT, the domestic cash pick-up service of Globe Telecom, was tapped by the Land Bank of the Philippines and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) for the pilot implementation of the government's Conditional Cash Transfer Program (CCT) in far-flung areas in Bulabac and Taytay in Palawan as well as Bordeos in Quezon.

Last November 5, 2010, DSWD, Landbank, and Globe through its wholly-owned mobile commerce subsidiary G-Xchange, Inc (GXI), went to Bulabac and Taytay in Palawan, and Bordeos in Quezon to pilot-run the disbursement of CCT cash grants to around 10,000 beneficiaries using GCASH REMIT.

The CCT cash grants are given to poor families by Landbank, either as over-the-counter payment, cash cards (ATMs) or through off-site payments. However, for far-flung areas like Bulabac, Taytay and Bordeos, Landbank has tapped the use of GCASH REMIT to distribute the cash grants.

"By utilizing GCASH REMIT, families in remote villages don't have to shell out money to travel just to get their monthly CCT cash grants. GCASH REMIT brings the money closer to them through its wide network of outlets in a safe and secure manner," said Globe President and CEO Ernest Cu.

"Globe GCASH is all about providing financial services to people at the base of the economic pyramid. By partnering in this program, Globe GCASH is able to serve those living in far-flung areas that traditional financial services cannot reach," Cu added.

Beneficiaries flock to local venues in their towns to receive CCT cash grants paid out through GCASH REMIT.

A young mother receives her family's CCT cash grant from a GCASH REMIT representative during the disbursement operation of DSWD, Landbank and Globe in Bordeos, Quezon.

The CCT program, also known as Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), is a vital component of the government's poverty alleviation agenda. 4Ps aims to help the country's poorest families by providing cash assistance in order to allow family members to get health, nutrition and education provided they comply with certain conditions like attending school, regular health check-ups, and vaccinations.

With the successful result of the initial pilot, DSWD added more areas that will receive their CCT cash grants via GCASH REMIT. The new areas include: Albay, Aurora, Cebu, Iloilo, Lanao del Norte, Masbate, Sarangani, Sorsogon and others.

www.globe.com.ph/gcash

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Ninoy Aquino, FVR get Korea war hero medal

TWO FILIPINO journalists who wielded the power of their pens in the defense of democracy in South Korea during the Korean War were among 14 Filipinos to early honored with a special medal presented by the Republic of Korea.

The late Jose Bragas "Ka-noy" S. Aquino Jr. and lawyer Juan T. Villasanta were conferred the "Korean War Hero Medal" in a special ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the Korean War.

Also conferred the Korean War Hero Medal were former President Fidel V. Ramos, Office Deputy Executive Sec. Jose Antonio Goitia, Col. Fernando Esguerra (Ret. AFP), Lt. Col. Ramon Aquino (Ret. AFP), Lt. Col. Rodolfo Aguinaldo (Ret. AFP), Lt. Col. Benigno

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LAGUNA

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NORTH EASTERN LUZON

NORTH-WESTERN LUZON

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PALAWAN

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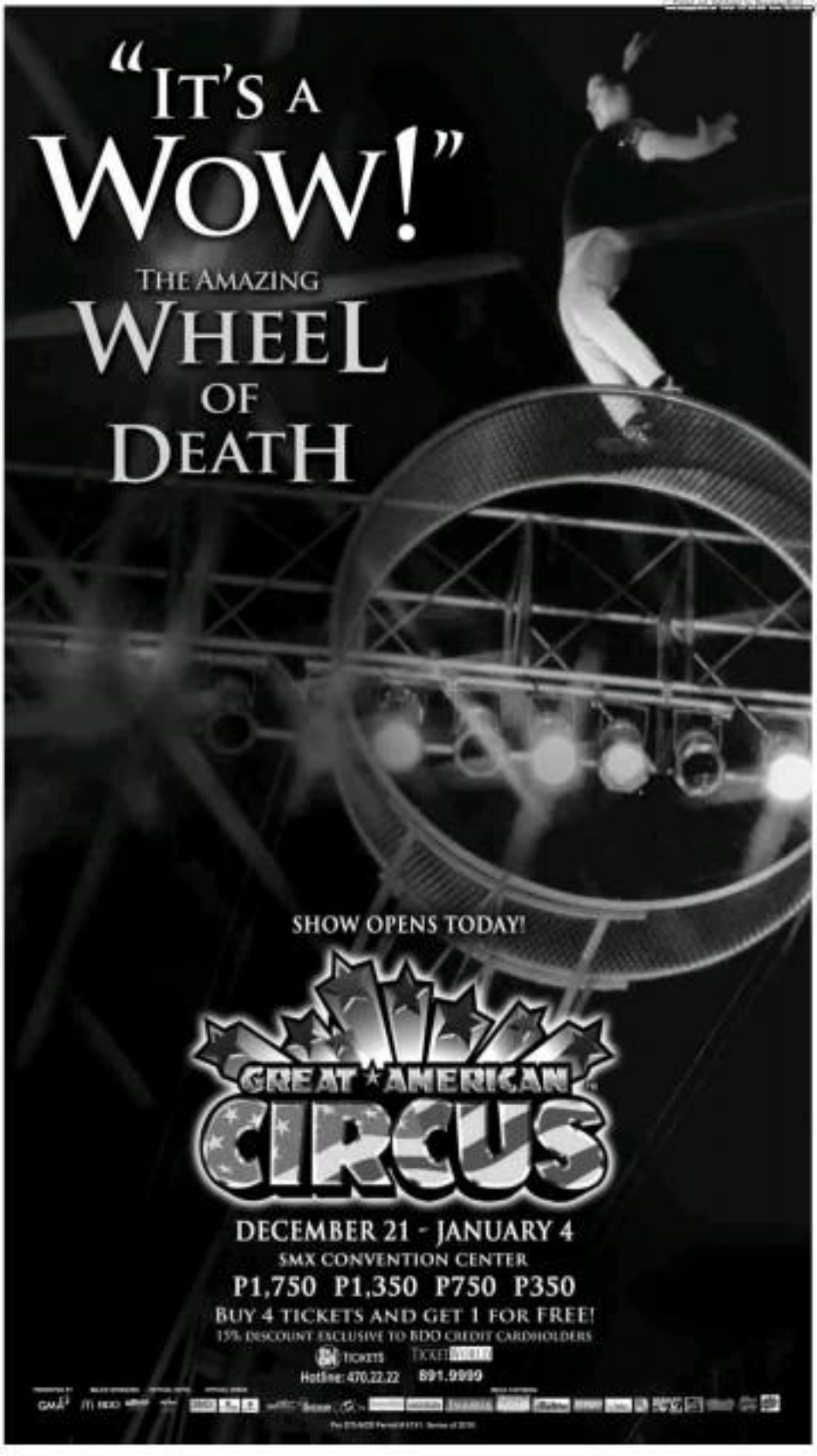
MINDANAO

All branches will be closed on December 25. Regular BDO Sunday banking schedule applies on December 28.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Garcia deal 'perils' US aid

From page A1

here of the line on this person... It may affect our capacity for further assistance from the EC," said Jose Custodio, a counter-insurgency officer of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Custodio is a military history professor at the University of Asia and the Pacific.

Under the plea bargain deal, Garcia, a former AFP comptroller, pleaded for dismissing P302 million from many counts, pleaded guilty to the lesser charge of illegal bribery and money laundering, and agreed to return about P130 million.

President Aquino said his administration's fight against corruption would not cease if Malacañang would do nothing about Garcia.

"If we fail to secure the conviction or punishment for the guilty, it would be a blow to our campaign against corruption," he said.

Aquino has directed Palace lawyers to find out if there were remedies the government could take.

Custodio said the US government was certainly watching closely the case of Garcia because two of his sons had been indicted in the United States for money laundering.

It was the US interrogation of the two that alerted the Philippine authorities about the attempt of Garcia's sons to bring $100,000 to each of the four Philippine International Airport in 2005.

Kickbacks

This led to the discovery of Garcia's alleged ill-gotten wealth believed to have come from kickbacks he received from suppliers in AFP-controlled.

Custodio, who has a masters' degree in history from the University of the Philippines, said it was likely that the development in Garcia's plunder case may figure in the determination by foreign policy-setting officers in Washington DC the US, Custodio said of the Garcia plunder case.

Mission chief Mr. Marcinski, acting spokesperson of the US Embassy in Manila, did not comment when Inquirer Central Luzon contacted him.

Malacañan referred the Inquirer to local authorities "for information on the release to Garcia."

But she said Washington "appreciates the excellent partnership that we have with the Philippines in many areas, including law enforcement, regional security issues and other, such development."

Ground for impeachment

Justice Secretary Leila de Lima did not shield the Office of the Ombudsman for having Garcia's cell the book, insisting it could be a ground to impeach Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez.

De Lima let out her biggest shot at the direction of Ombudsman Special Prosecutor Wendell Barreras-Sulit to entire talk a plea bargain agreement with Garcia.

She said the "illegal and unconscionable" deal was "barbarism, culpable approved" by Gutierrez.

"I don't think the deal can be submitted to the Sandiganbayan without the imprimatur of the Ombudsman herself," De Lima told reporters.

"I should say that it can be a ground (for impeachment). It's both moral and legal. I don't think he blatantly approve deals like that in the detriment of the people, the government," she added.

Only four years after his arrest, Garcia walked to his freedom from a detention facility in Camp Crame on November after posting a P60,000 bail following the Sandiganbayan's approval of the plea bargain agreement.

The Office of the Ombudsman's prosecutors-core that the case against Garcia was strong made the deal even more dubious, according to De Lima.

"They said they have a strong case. If that's true, then why enter into a plea bargain? This a plunder, a very grave offense. Why enter into a deal? He's worth four sons," she said.

In a separate statement, De Lima said the deal violated Rule 116 Section 2 of the Rules of Court. She said plea bargain deals should be made before or after the presentation of the accused, not long after the trial started.

Tainted with illegality

Since the agreement struck by the former senior general with the Ombudsman was made after the trial began, she said the deal was "tainted with illegality from the start."

Because of the "clear violation" of the court rules, De Lima said the deal should be voided by the Ombudsman.

De Lima said the Ombudsman's action was a blow to Mr. Aquino's campaign to put an end to graft and corruption in government.

"This is one clear illustration of how the administration efforts of a determined Aquino administration can get easily frustrated or derailed by the half-hearted... actions of the Ombudsman's," she said.

Although the Office of the Ombudsman is a constitutional body, the justice secretary said the President had the power to hand out disciplinary actions to Ombudsman deputies and quasi-prosecutors under Section 8 of the Ombudsman's Act of 1989.

She said the result could be cases of prosecutors to study the agreement, make recommendations to Ombudsman and find possible violations against Sulit.

Sulit said prosecutors were studying not on the plea bargain deal.

In a statement, Sulit said De Lima should stop interpreting her and has been until it ruling was handed down.

Sulit also said it was "unfortunate" that the justice secretary was speaking without knowing the full details of the case.

The plea bargain deal was in accord with jurisprudence, she said. She also pointed out that the merits of the case should not be disrupted because it involves the acts of earlier rule.

Sulit said the Ombudsman's government efforts to stamp out corruption had been compromised because the plea bargain deal was an "unsupported confession."

In a statement, the Makati Business Club said the Management Association of the Philippines said they were "deeply dismayed and alarmed" by the recent developments in the plunder case against Garcia.

A Catholic bishop also objected to the plea bargain agreement. "It's not right because he has already done public evil so there should be punishment," Bishop Pedro Marin Arwood said on Radio Veritas. "Otherwise, people may think the rich can always get away with it." *With reports from Jerry Esplanada, Leila B. Salaverria and Jaclyn D. Ly*

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'Living history' marks 75th AFP rites today

From page A1

today said Gavid back in time and invited to "living history."

As part of the anniversary parade, which starts at 8 a.m., history buffs will wear authentic uniforms and armaments worn by Filipino soldiers since the Katipunan was born to World War II.

They are from the Bataan re-enactment group Heroes of Philippine History, and also by an engineer.

They also authentic military uniforms and accessories which they have collected through the years at their own expense. They also their for educational purposes during special events.

They agreed to render their services for free for today's military ceremonies.

Yesterday, at the launch of the anniversary ceremonies, Lieutenant Gen. Ricardo Visaya, commander of the Philippine Army, said the AFP would "continue to be a professional, credible and effective armed force."

Visaya said the AFP would "continue to be a professional, credible and effective armed force."

Visaya said the AFP would "continue to be a professional, credible and effective armed force."

Visaya

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

A taste of success

IF SOME motorists think that traffic on Edsa has turned from intolerable to hopeless as Christmas nears and holiday makers rush to get their shopping done, it may not be their imagination playing tricks on them. The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority says traffic on the metropolis' main highway has actually improved since the second week of December. And it has the data to prove it: The average speed of travel on Edsa during rush hours shot up 22.6 percent, from 20.16 kph on Oct. 27 to 22.157 kph on Dec. 9, although it slowed down to 20.79 kph on Dec. 15.

EDITORIAL

But even minus the statistics, people who have been using Edsa for years will probably agree. Compared to Christmases past, the flow of Edsa traffic during this holiday season does seem to move a wee bit faster. Or at least, the holiday traffic this year seems to be no worse than what it was during the other months of the year. (This seems to be true also of some other major thoroughfares, like Quezon Avenue and Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard.)

How did they do it? The MMDA says the easing of traffic on Edsa is the result of the reduction in the number of vehicles as many private vehicles take the "Christmas buses." These buses are side streets close to Edsa that were repaired and cleared of parked vehicles and other obstructions to encourage private motorists to use them in going to Makati from Quezon City and vice versa. Traffic enforcers have also been assigned to direct traffic on these alternative routes.

The lighter traffic in the country's busiest thoroughfare resulting from the opening of Christmas buses serves to prove the obvious: Like water, motorists will choose the path of least resistance. Make driving in the side streets more convenient and motorists will use them rather than crawl through Edsa.

It also helped that the MMDA stuck to its decision not to divide passenger buses in the "color coding scheme" despite a short-lived strike. This cut down their number by about 20 percent on weekdays. A crackdown on "colorum" vehicles must have also reduced some more the number of buses on Edsa.

After a humbling start with the ill-advised attempt to revive the odd-even scheme, MMDA Chair Francis Tolentino seems to be moving in the right direction. Reassuringly, he got the support of the Metro Manila Council in seeking for the MMDA a part in the process of determining how many buses should be allowed to operate in the metropolis. That is a function being exercised by the Land Transportation and Franchising Regulatory Board which has been issuing franchises apparently without regard for the very limited capacity of the metropolitan road network to carry traffic. It seems only fair to involve the MMDA in the process since it has the responsibility of managing traffic in the metropolitan area.

Tolentino has been reported to have come up with 10 proposals to improve the flow of traffic in Metro Manila. We hope it includes a scheme that builds upon and extends the concept of the Christmas buses. This involves reclaiming for public use the streets that contain individuals' low-occupancy cars that private cars as garages, parking lots or repair shops. If the MMDA and the city governments will cooperate in clearing the streets of Metro Manila of obstructions, they might be surprised at how much more easily and smoothly the traffic will flow.

Balanced growth

FOREIGN COMMENT

Chino Leaño (Beijing)

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Gifts

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"MARIE!" YELLED the kids after hefting offices needs at our gifts. The Grinch grew three sizes and sneered, "Bah enough." they stomped. It was a demand, not a request—so unlike the rapt-eyed children on sites.

Has the old "genius" syndrome ravaged us? Surely sung for gifts freely given? But those kids are nothing compared to some officials who straddle government on each of controlled corporations (GOCCs) or financial agencies.

Ask Sen. Franklin Drilon. Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System directors, Drilon found, gorged on three types of Christmas bonanza—plus 52 other kinds of bonuses throughout the year. Listed by "platinum-level allowances, bonuses, incentives, work upturns," Christmas or no Christmas, are instrumental in most GOCCs.

Among the spendthrifts on the local beauty is Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. Their holidaymakers resulted in "a noticeable increase in the aggregate deficit of 14 mentioned firms," Asian Development Bank noted. "This brings their loans to double-digit ratio (profits)."

The Christmas some 45 GOCCs will log down is P22.1 billion. Add to that public investors for shareholders. Sen. Ralph Recto swallowed. They'll hello Christmas three through "corporate governance." That leaps from P9.1 million worth of 50,000-item pencil umbrellas to daily planners-cum-ballpoints, capped up or double the market prices.

"Nobody says government should play Scrooge," Recto said. But enough is enough. Those freebies are broken spend for the till. And, a semblance of reason must replace today's self-pamper.

President Aquino's more perks, until this year's end, for other banter Robin and Francisco Lacson Bautista calls like government's "corporate tax cuts." What his underpaved public support is "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas" (treasures)...a play on the 1957 character of Dr. Seuss' children's book by a blogger.

Mere hints in possible leeway for policy-makers-based bonuses. That's an honored method to draw and keep brains, especially in banks. But none he must crack down on the GOCCs that put lip service to his order.

Government has no monopoly on the "platinum syndrome," writes San Juan columnist Richard Gun. She believes corporations, right-point rules for people who swing down for personnel, benchdown-then, and move are colored.

Don't ask, then if others do, Gun counsels. Don't complain. "This is not a business transaction," but a voluntary gesture of the giver. "Some don't see many years out of gratitude. Others, that are in demand like a gift be reserved. There's a mail, Smiles, etc. to give thanks. "Surely, your mother taught you some manners."

"Call me old fashioned," But to spell out what present you want, unless asked, is a no-no. Squelch the itch to whip out your wish list, unless the prospective giver ask. "The absolute worst thing" is to return cash and demand another one.

"What is a about the holidays season that makes people, otherwise courteous, especially shameless when it comes to gifts?" Line stresses. "Is it a thing of this generation? Or just an ability to still right from wrong, after so many years of doing the wrong thing?"

Don't greed piano-ripple. "Merry Christmas," sequel aren't never told. They'll thank you're understanding. And smile. Now post the country that handles "platitude-greetings with decorum.

"Christmas is a necessity," the late Ojie exports remember his best-selected. "There has to be at least one day in the year to remind us that we're here for something else beside ourselves."

Perhaps, nothing reflects Reverend's insight better than the 1696 G Peters short story "The Gift of the Magi."

O. Henry's now William Sydney Porter's pen name. An author who is dead for established the story on toilet paper, between swigs, at Fritz's Tavern, in New York City. A numbing nephew hand carried the draft, page by page, to a waiting editor.

The story line a couple: James Dillingham Young and wife Della, who live in a rented like apartment, are broke. Neither can afford to shop for a gift on Christmas Eve.

Della sold her knee-length brown hair to a wig maker. Instantly, she buys Jim a chain for a prized pocket watch inherited from his grandfather. Jim sold his watch. He then purchases a set of combs, made out of tortoiseshell, for her hair.

Granted I Let O. Henry tell it:

"The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the baby in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt were ones, possibly having the privilege of exchange in case of duplication.

"In a flat in a cheap section of these days let it be said that of two people who lived in apartments one was the wife. Of all rules they and were gifts, such as they are soon. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the Magi."

After dusting Jim's side in her native Norway Nobel Laureate (1928) Sigrid Undset rephrased O. Henry's insight into a more pungent note:

"And if you can't give much money, Christmas gift is the same. All as remember that the less given to the sun and the moon and the stars, and the earth with its forests and mountains and oceans—and all that lives and moves upon them.

"The less given at all gives things and everything that Heavenly and Earth's all and all that we gained about and all that we have received. And to save us from our foolishness, from all our sins, the same down to earth and gave us himself."

(Email: jmercado@gmail.com)

Shameless

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IGNACIO MACAPAGAL-Arroyo is no longer in the P200 bill. Or no longer so prominently. She used to be at the back of it, facing more or less (that's politics I think). Recently, in 2001, she has been relocated instead to the front side, which seems the pursuit of her duties, but it is not an upgrade. Her inauguration is just a tiny portrait, and her face can only be recognized by someone who is seeing glasses.

Where she used to be, there is now the visage of Bohol, one of the country's tourist destinations, a town not more spacious than to bring you around by motorized groups.

It's as it should be. She should be demoted after still appears in any currency, however in small denomination form, so tattle her names in life, at least her 2001 inaugural was legitimate, the product of no Edsa. Her 2004 one was not, as she herself acknowledged by holding it in the dead of night, with only the dead, apostles or otherwise, to witness it. I don't know that a photograph of that exists. But it has no place in any currency, which doesn't just mean money but means as well relevance, significance, enduring presence. Her replacement by a leader is necessary to say it is not because she resembles one—I resent a lie more—it is because, like a lunatic, she is an endangered species that is being explicitly protected not by the environmental groups but by the Supreme Court, at least the lunatic does not deserve to become extinct. She does. To do the people in the Court indeed not by be the done but by the weight.

The protection of her criminals is her specter. Rarely had the Supreme Court ruled to scrap the Truth Commission, which would bring the dead of night to the light of day, thereby failed to remind the case of her son, Mikey Arroyo, in the House electoral tribunal where it has a lien for chance of getting through. The case concerns Arroyo supervising security guards and drivers as a party-list representative.

What is there to remind? What is there to employ faculties of discernment for? As every leadership analyst has pointed out, Arroyo has a right to expunge the security guards and drivers of this country only in the same way that the Imperium have the right to expunge the brains of the Scots. The only driver Arroyo knows is the one he uses to pull, and the only security guards he can remember, or probably can't, are the ones that Mikey Arroyo has coupled up for not entering fast enough. It's a day to outdoor dentists, never mind from democracy, and common decency, never mind government, should have slapped back the way day GMA slunk out of Malacañang.

Even Honduras, whose first still opinion prominently on the P1000 bill, as well as decade. People who are still alive who once worked for him, as lawyer him, as remember him, are he was a good man. He him to have produced children and children's children who would be known only for their grasping need, for their desperate yearning for position they would do everything to have it, or cling to it, however petty, however humiliating, however demeaning. And to the most unkindest cut of all. The only thing he may be thankful for is that they do know why is name other than "Macapagal."

If you thought the days when 2004 would do her worst and dare the country to do some thing about it are gone, think again. Thanks to the Supreme Court, the one thing the beleaguered such powerful appointees, these guerrillas are being thrown by the day she's will there is to meet in.

Her worst helpless, we can't do a thing about it.

Not at all. There's always People Power to push back tyranny and its cronies. People Power does not always have to take the form of taking to the streets and making appearance.

But it does have to start with the people's refusal to be cowed by the powerful, to be intimidated by the powerful, to be bullied by the powerful. It has to start with the people's refusal to be shameless in the face of the shameless.

Then a Public Opinion. That is power.

Let's get education right

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

EVERYONE AGREES that education is the reason society needs a lot of things. But not everyone agrees that we should add two more years to our existing 10-year basic education curriculum, as provided in the K-12 proposal of the Department of Education. I do. As an education for itself even if it were to end there. Two years has many 16-year-old college entrants flaghead to make one of their most crucial life decisions—that of their career direction—in the back of both intellectual and emotional immaturity. Many of our college students then start out pursuing courses of study that they don't like, or dropping out altogether, after two years in college—at that stage time that they should have found that crucial cluster of life direction, not two years earlier. Of those who persist and manage to graduate in their originally chosen course, chances are they will end up in a job unrelated to their major course in college.

My faith in K-12 is premised on government providing the required budgetary support, of course, and extending to the various subsectors need, especially the poorest and underserved, needed to make it work. Many other arguments have been made for and against K-12, but I will not dwell on them here. My interest is more on the close link between education and the state of our economy, and the role that the educated elite has held out to society back all these years.

We often hear it said that apart from Japan, our economy was the best in Asia up until the 1960s, but it steadily fell behind thereafter. It seems to me that our economic decline is falling behind those of our neighbors in about the time our educational systems lost its acknowledged superiority in the region and deteriorated through time to its pathetic state today. A school principal I know quipped in a more recent private sign-boarding the problem quite aptly, when he lamented that the kind of schools we have been giving our children has kept our country backward: our economy poor and our society deeply divided. I couldn't agree with her more.

In our mind, our educational system has not only perpetuated past to our society, it has even widened them. Children of the moneyed class can go to the best schools, while the vast majority of Filipino children can only hope for poorer or sub-standard public education. And that's because we consistently fail to ensure enough in public education. The share of the total government budget going to education had in fact steadily declined since the late '90s. Through that time, spending per pupil had also dropped to a pathetic reportedly spent P5,119 per pupil in 2000, which went down to P5,074 in 2001, and down further to P4,782 in 2006 (in real terms, i.e., adjusted for inflation)—an economist what were barely paid and corruption.

Our schools fail from coordinately on the social, linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences, and could significantly on students strong in these two—neglecting that there are at least five other intelligences more or less equally important to our future. And yet, our's success in life and mathematics success can be based on two of these other intelligences, as well (e.g., musical intellect, body-kinesthetic, visual-spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal). And so, those who are not so blessed in these and competencies—which help sharpen verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences—become "the underclass" and drop-outs leaves who land the best jobs and end up as the most powerful in society. Those weak in these specific intelligences—which are also deemed to be the other intelligences—are sidelined as the bulk of school, and eventually, in society as a whole, ending up as the weak and marginalized. And so, rather than being the great republic we is, it should be, education has become a great divider of our country instead.

What other lessons learned is that our schools grow our students mostly for jobs, rather than create jobs, after they graduate. They are led to be content to merely seek employment, rather than create wealth. Our schools have also not done the entrepreneurial dreams created such a swell among multinational but, when they should be dreaming of setting up their own enterprises and creating new jobs for others. Entrepreneurship need not just be inborn: it can be learned. Entrepreneurial values must be inculcated as early as grade school, entrepreneurship skills can then be taught in high school and college. We should be envisioning our education from employment to entrepreneurship. It's no wonder that President Aquino finds the country daily seeking—ready for employment.

Finally, our schools constantly bombard students with knowledge and information, often neglecting that the ultimate objective of education is to impart wisdom, that is, the capacity to use knowledge to make good decisions in life. Even much of those real truth, but let's not forget that wisdom comes first, learning. Our institutions (including history) and blurred ours. In this age of ICT and the internet, information and knowledge are literally at our fingertips. We need not fill our children's heads with long schedules of our schoolchildren, we spend the bulk of school time memorizing them from the mouth of the teacher and the chalk on the blackboard to the tests and exits of the children. We then reward those who are willing to store much of these the students had retained—often our concern should be whether they have become better able to solve their own problems and those of the community embedded the world.

Education is clearly the single most vital investment we can make in our nation's future. It is time we reversed the disinvestment as it we have seen in past years.

E-mail: cielito.habito@gmail.com

Christmas citizen

AS LA Auld Lang Syne holidays. Every holiday presented a reason to celebrate—whether it was tree planting or the birthdays of Martin Luther King And Gerónimo, the holiday of all holidays, must be one I liked how. It was a holiday that surrounded you, that engulfed your life with sparkle and love. The lights, the Christmas trees, the holiday décor and the Noche Buena (one was everywhere, wrapping my spirits and turning me

roundings into a colorful playground. I could feel the joy more intensely because I was a child. The colors and the sudden insight of people's faces caused them more into a heartwarming. Maybe spending itself and opening the heart to innocent wonder.

YOUNG BLOOD

Monica S. Mallampalli

Christmas was a season when our friends of different races—Chinese, Iranian, Chilean, French—gathered under our roof and exchanged gifts and stories. It was a season for Filipinos exiled in the United States to invite their colleagues to dinner of adobo, pancit and lechon imported from New Jersey.

The excitement of the season we awaited on our house took the shape of the gifts I looked forward to see on Christmas morning: storybooks, dolls, the stuffed animal left by Santa Claus to see red sock after I left him cookies and a glass of milk. My parents were always with me to make that special day happy and memorable. Everything Christmas represented, and every object that represented it, were things that kept me fascinated for many years.

It was a fascination that I rarely miss especially now that Christmas doesn't seem as magical as it used to be. Being native to the trees of the world, I sometimes feel that Christmas is something we grudgingly expect every year to discover again. We start really aware to—and I can hold employees hanging decorations inside ISO as if it were just one of their many chores. It may be an attitude people find before, but there was looking through the lens of a child. Maybe it's because I am now living in a time or where too many people cannot afford to buy themselves a decent meal, much less a Christmas Eve feast. Seeing the poverty of the world's people right before the poverty line, pretending to be happy ignoring others who cannot afford to be happy seems almost morbid. Forcing one's self to smile at the end of every year when no one else is not and makes one wonder if it's worth it after all.

I am beginning to realize, as I approach my 20th Christmas on this earth, that it's not the gifts to be unwrapped, but those forget our poverty, our loneliness and our toil to us on Christmas. It is silly to say we can forget these. On Christmas can't be an escape habit. In truth, material happiness, even for a child, who is constantly learning about the world, can't last forever.

The issues we live are all outcomes of this entire struggles of life. And that is the reason why we celebrate Christmas, heralding renewal and a sort of rebirth. Jesus is reborn year after year, bringing the promise of salvation, and in a way, he gives us a chance to enjoy our lives under the different circumstances created by age and experience.

When I was a child experiencing Christmas, I was endorsing—as I am now—the spirit of the season. However, my birth as was simply joy, was made a magical celebration. By the hands of Jesus himself. My second wish, last my parents, and the people around me gave me the opportunity to appreciate that birth, unlike many children of my home country who cannot given the same chance. Knowing that this life we unlucky out is meaningful for Christian miracle for mother a child opportunity and hopeful. It gives a child the confidence to open doors which once seemed closed and to walk through those doors without fear of rejection. Giving children a reason to live is something I as an adult can do to experience. On times not as a mother but as the Santa Claus of my memories.

I am not a millionaire waiting my allowance to budget, but there are some perks I enjoy which most people, and many children, deserve to enjoy. I can share toll inside a day, have not afternoon snack, and occasionally buy jewelry for myself (which I do more often nowadays because of so many energies). I can also afford to buy gifts for my family and kings. When I was a child I had a whole pile of gifts under the Christmas tree to myself (the youngest female of my parents and had a few dollars to put a smile on a little girl's face). Having aside from myself, among other ways of gaining access to charitable organizations for children, is one simple way of giving a little bit of what I have to people who aren't as fortunate as I am. Giving to children who have not by giving them enough for a decent meal to this season they deserve to enjoy too, is a way of showing them that there is hope, no matter how cruel life seems to them. Giving them hope instills optimism in them, providing them a better chance of living happy and productive lives. If we do not become them kindness, they will take the path of hopelessness.

Monica S. Mallampalli, 22, is a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin, where she is taking her master's in writing. The article was written when she was a sophomore at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

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THEY SAID

P-Noy's choice

"If you don't know me alone, I guarantee that you personally won't interested in anything. This is a democracy. You have a choice. There is no choice to hide and hide."

—Philippine Speaker and Ang Bahay Kapatiran vice-presidential candidate Jejomar Binay, addressing taxpayers

Continuing fear

"The story will not end with these release. Political detainees like them are often stalled, some targeted for extrajudicial executions. So free and unfairly exposed."

—Carlos Conde, Human Rights Watch researcher, on the release of the "Morong 43," detained under martial law at the National Health Institute

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Two praiseworthy appointments

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THE APPOINTMENTS (of two women) by P-Noy inspire hope for the new year but also shocking if not for the rest of the hapless administration.

First off, the appointment of Bernadette "Bernie" Ignacio Romulo-Puno as chairperson of the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) has been long anticipated and rosary as good as right now.

The PCW remained and neutralized according to the Magna Carta of Women, been a dumping field in running that role for the past Arroyo years, initially aimed at rewarding into local for the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Rodney had successfully facilitated to some other areas of gender discrimination, but it was only in the last administration, not implemented and have an impact on the lives of Filipino women.

Romulo-Puno's multi-award of the challenges ahead of the PCW, but I am happy to see her assigned to all the French working but well, the apologetic "at least days" like the ones she faced when she retained the post of executive director in 1995–1998. Manuel Concepcion or the Role of Filipino Women, the PCW was once known as.

At the time, Romulo-Puno with the SCRIPT brand (first channel) by Socorro "Tali" Ligutan, now the Chair of the CHED, was given responsibility for the Beijing Platform for Action, a blueprint for empowering women into community-based welfare projects, to mainstreaming gender equality in government policies and projects, to the wants of all sectors included here. Rita Gita during one budget hearing. "You want to transform the entire government machinery?"

And that indeed was what Romulo and her successors attempted. Among other accomplishments, she helped draft the Women in Development and Nation Building Act, which later became a companion piece to the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (1987–1992) and served as a model for the integration of gender into government policy in the regions.

ON A more personal level, I have known Romulo-Puno for well over two decades, being one of four "Bantaeditor" of Pilipina, the national organization of Filipino women which I now chair, in 1983.

Among us Pilipinas sisters, Romulo is known as our resident "bahaylan," since she presides over blessings, birthdays, anniversaries, inaugurations and other such occasions, with a prayer at Diokno, pagan and made-up rituals. Indeed, Romulo-Puno made fun of what she calls her "hocus-and-pocus side" (Christianity before and in addition to the rituals of the babaylan) and which at the same time practiced, chopped and always on the go.

What makes Romulo all the more remarkable is that her social involvement and commitment began long before the terms "civil society" and even "social responsibility" became popular and trendy. She says that she belongs to the "pre-historic" social activist movement.

I first experienced her formidable force in debate years of the country as she worked in youth action, community-based health programs, community theater groups (including a stint as executive director of PETA), and women's organizing. She is one of the founders of the Center for Asia Pacific Women in Politics (Cepwip), a regional forum working for gender empowerment in the region, and an offshoot of Pilipina's days, aims to "bridge the gap between the lack of women in politics and public power as in our advocacy." Romulo is also a member of the World Bank's External Gender Consultative Group.

All of these explains why I am particularly enthused about Romulo-Puno's appointment. It's the women's movement has long been packing. It's about time and it couldn't be more timely.

THE OTHER appointment I'm excited about is that of Edna "Sabet" Co as, former secretary of Department of Environment and Natural Resources, as presidential adviser on climate change.

Sabet may have had all the "Iron Fister" she needed to be appointed environment secretary by then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. But what only establishes Jun Romeo as a presidential adviser on the most important environmental issue of our time is how long after she left the Arroyo Cabinet, she went back to her NGO concerns and worked even harder to push for laws that could make our country better prepared to cope with the impact of climate change.

Together with the Romulo appointment to the BIDA of another woman environmentalist, Sherie Ann Atienza, and the reappointment of Lorraine Badoy as chairperson of the Philippine Commission on Population, P-Noy has given us reason to be optimistic that the Aquino Cabinet, after its rocky start, is finally getting its act together.

FROM WHAT I understand, Sabet's designation is separate from that of the Commission on Climate Change. President Aquino is the chair of the CCC, while Sabet's duties, in addition to the positions of vice chairperson and executive director in place of former senator Kenny Mercado, who was quite content to stand in that post.

Sabet's role as presidential adviser can surely provide the needed and right input to guide the President in formulating policies and actions to meet the new challenges presented by climate change, as well as in formulating positions and negotiating points in the global talks on climate change.

It is an admin but nevertheless stark reality that the countries that contribute the least in terms of greenhouse gas emissions are those affected by the impacts of climate change. As far the negotiations have centered around making wealthier countries pay the bill, but also combating China and India pay for the climate change problems caused by their rapid growth. Some of these are also started taking how countries like the Philippines can make sure their own "carbon footprint" doesn't grow to be the same proportion and therefore.

5 million books

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

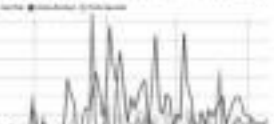
BOOKLE BOOKS is a cute name for several successful online marketplaces for new and used books in the Philippines (a category so big that its many books is possible, especially for nonprofit) means may only be the most visiting. These and other issues are controversies even though, or especially because, casual readers and scholarly researchers alike already enjoy the benefits of digitized books directly.

Many of the books now available only in Philippine format, but even the limits of this format can be lessening: some books offer a few pages (as we can read N. Miguel Bernad on "The Library at Brgy's Bernard House"), others several dozens, perhaps even a couple of hundreds (such is the case, for instance, of the massive and massively detailed Indonesian-English dictionary by Alexander M. Stevens and A. Rik Iskandarsjah Tellings).

Last week, Google announced one more thing—and it is a big one—and it's a word, "comprehensive analysis" of the millions of books already digitized is now possible. In the first version of Google's N-gram viewer, users can browse a "string of characters (understood by a space)", or can "search" over 500 billion words contained in over 5 million books (to be exact, 361 billion words in English out of 468 billion words in the universe of all books ever published." What does this all mean? It means we can "observe cultural trends and subject them to quantitative investigation." All the posts are from the paper published last week in Science magazine, co-written by 11 authors and led by Erez Lieberman Aiden.

"Big" sounds forbidding, but in fact the viewer was designed to be fun, informative and ridiculously easy to use.

For instance: Searching the 361 billion words available in the English corpus (the largest of seven language corpora, and the most available) for mentions of Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio and Emilio Aguinaldo in the 150 years between 1800 and 2000 yields a very clear picture of the ebb and flow of historical reputation, if by reputation we mean the sense of contemporary relevance.



By the graphic above, Rizal is represented by the line in dark shade, Bonifacio by the medium shade, Aguinaldo by the line in light.)

We can see that Aguinaldo was much more famous and written about than Rizal during the latter years of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century. His role as a revolutionary general and first president of the first Asian republic, which was opposed in the international news columns of the newspapers at the time, is recorded in the books published in those very years.

Both the first two peaks in the graph (the first one at the height of the Philippine-American War, and the second the reissue Cast only) seem all immediately before and during the first Philippine assembly election of 1907.

Rizal's reputation reached its peak in the early 1960s; in 1961, the international community saw the first Philippine presidential election of Diosdado Macapagal. The peak that followed soon after may have been propelled by the government's publication of the now-standard Rizal compilation of writings.)

We can see other milestones in local studies in Bound to the graph. For instance, the centennial commemorations of Rizal's execution in the early 1990s is caught in the web of data, while the Gawad ng Bonifacio Award—Ambeth Ocampo's "Imagined Communities" one of the most influential books of the late 20th century—seems to have generated an immense amount of renewed interest in Rizal after its publication in 1995.

Bonifacio's graph shows the extraordinary influence of the compelling—and deeply controversial—image of Bonifacio in 1896. In "Revolt of the Masses," the still-reasoned reference on Bonifacio and the Katipunan, is not published. I think the graph shows the immediate and impressive impact of Agoncillo's history.

The centennial commemorations of 1996 (the revolution), Rizal's execution in 1996 (the proclamation of independence) register in the graphic only as "noise" (which is a technical term—I promise). But should we be further reflection, both of the series and the variety.

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jnery@inquirer.com.ph; johnnery.wordpress.com

Help Mang Lauro to move on

LETTERS

THE DEFENSE Court has spoken with finality. A judgment of acquittal, whether on grounds that the accused did not commit the crime or that reasonable doubt exists as to his guilt, is irreversible. Detectives students know this by heart. It's the most elementary under the constitutional guarantee against double jeopardy.

Unlike the cacophony of Ifugaobanks being opinions regarding the wisdom of that verdict, comes Public Attorney's Office Chief Persida Acosta claiming in with a contradictor concept that all it was lost for Lauro Vizconde. Doing she stands in the media, she said a motion for reconsideration is still available to seek a reversal of that verdict. What arrant nonsense. She is obviously talking through her hat.

Another lawyer who claims to be close gentleman, Alan Paguia, became such his own unclassified source for that verdict signed by only seven justices of the Supreme Court is no good, to overturn the judgment of conviction inched in by the solid seven and also appellate courts. He cited old jurisprudence that used to hold that the absolute majority of the seven needed to render a valid verdict in a case heard by the Supreme Court en banc (all of the 15 members) or eight, not seven. He forgot to touch up on the new Constitution which now categorically declares that all it takes is a majority of the justices "who actually took part in the deliberations." (Art. VIII, Sec. 4 (2), 1987 Constitution). True, those who resigned from the service and checkers "took no part" are not included in the count.

Some many media acumen, it seems that Vizconde has not showed on with his life. It continues to live in the past by preserving everything in the house the way it was in the time of the massacre. The mob has been miserable for the longest time ever, Rowena and Jiggins are doing best given injustice by erasing the frailties of fate hopes. Enough of those pathetic stunts! Mrs. et gandhi should instead help him and pray that he finds the serenity to accept the things that he cannot longer change.

—STEPHEN L. MONSERATE,
stmonserate@yahoo.com.ph

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Tigbao and Makiling Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4795, 897-4794, or e-mail readers@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish anonymous letters nor withhold names upon request.

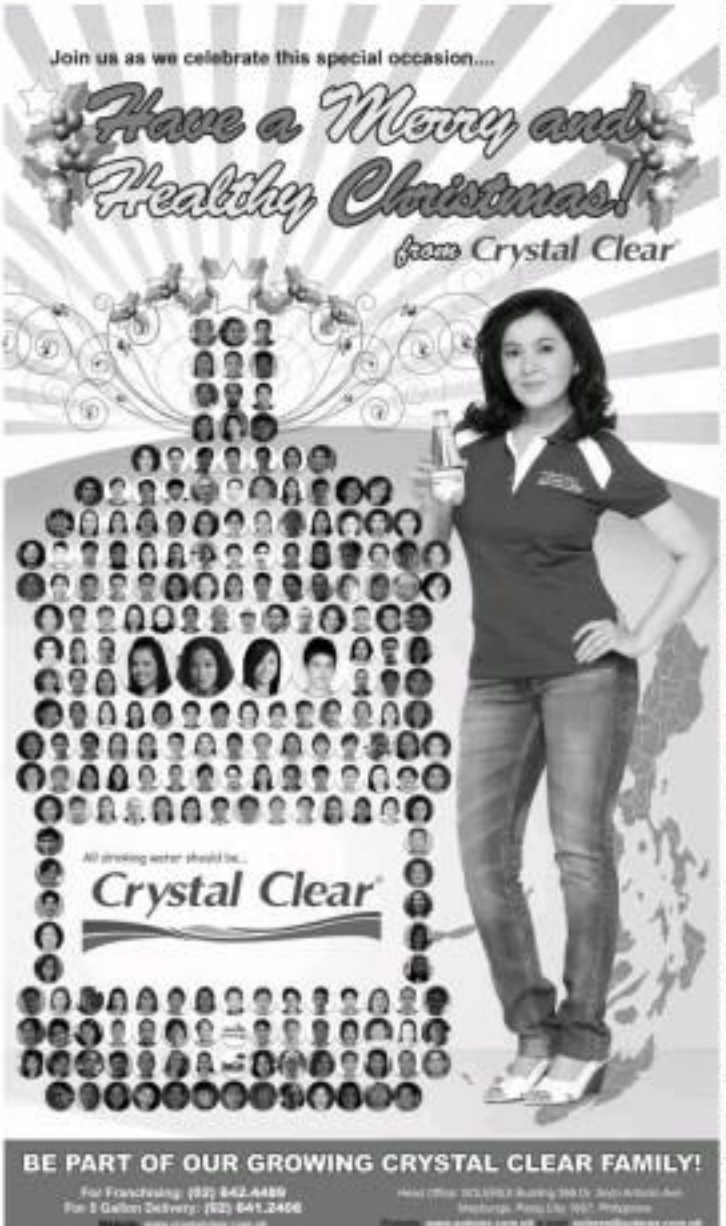
SC decision trumps public accountability

CONTRARY IMPRESSIONS to unusual disappointment with the decision of the Supreme Court declaring Executive Order No. 1, which created the Truth Commission, unconstitutional. While Constitutional law has always maintained that the power of the prosecutor's constitution may be exercised by the Department of Justice and other branches of government while the executive Ombudsman continues to prove itself oblivious to the fate of the past disappointment, will this recent decision declaring EO 1 unconstitutional would bolster impunity in the country and ruin the impunity the constitutional principles of accountability of public officers.

Even watching that the powers of the Truth Commission would duplicate the powers of the Ombudsman, there is nothing in the Constitution that says that the powers to enforce the country's laws can be accountability of public officers is a monopoly of the Ombudsman. Neither may it be said that EO 1 violates the equal protection clause. The power of the commission is only investigatory in nature and, hence, its activities would not affect the constitutional rights of anyone under investigation. As a purely investigative body, its powers are clear: to exercise in nature and hence, it is within the powers of the President to create such a commission and is refined to the Office of the President.

What is objectionable to this writer is: cause of the court is its implications. Outside the failure of the criminal justice system to secure convictions in high disappointment, the decision can be read to mean a grant of impunity to the past disappointment. Certainly, it sends a very loud message that the present Supreme Court will not look favorably upon suppose's President Aquino's declared promotion of promoting honesty in government by taking offensive steps to investigate, prosecute and punish those who may have violated our criminal laws on public officers. The decision, in short, is a big setback to those who would the search for the truth in our constitutional.

—PEDRO E. BAÑEZ L. ABOGADO JR.



What the youth proved in recent protest rallies

TAKE THOUSANDS upon thousands of students and academic workers flooded the streets to oppose cuts in the education budget in scenes reminiscent of historical. And in marking history, we always go back to the wages that has always united laboring people everywhere—the anger for life as opposed to the logic of neoliberalism. What we took to the streets, are were up against the wall class basis to those making forward to where basic rights are enjoyed to all.

We've been told that the struggle has soared, and that the youth protest is no longer a force to reckon with. But the series of protest actions led by students and key sectors in the vernacular strength of the youth against policies that threaten to reinforce the privatization of education to make it cost more feasible to the demands of the market, as opposed to the necessity of universal public education. United with academic workers, the students proved that collective action is the three effective means by which concrete gains are accomplished.

The great Prof. Zy Ed Ordoñez tells and the collective mobilization are now reservoirs of inspiration and strength for other sectors in society clamoring for genuine change through organized and collective action. While the additional funding for education announced on Dec. 3 before students swooped to the Senate's deputy vice president, it is enough proof that we did not fight in vain.

There is a concern to the claim that education extends beyond classrooms. In everyday life, students learn in their homes in malls, on the streets and elsewhere. Even schools are media—spaces where the lesson of individualism is taught so well and trains supreme. So when the youth decisively walk out of their classes to unite in the front's abandonment of education, when student activists mobilize their forces to converge on specific issues and their political importance, they are saying they value education and their future very much.

These sacrifices, like the ones before that made history can never be reduced to endless discussions for good grades. Nor do the concrete results from those who insist upon holistic (but not only) divide solidarity—much like the cuts of bureaucrats that deny the reality of budget cuts. Most of all, these sacrifices cannot compare with the hardships undergone by the majority of the Filipino people, as an effect of the privatization of social services, do not even have access to higher education.

The unjust exclusion of those who cannot pay for education is the goal of privatization, and today's rise to education is not for the means. We protest in the fight for greater accessibility to education: education is not for sale, we are not for sale!

It is only by struggle that the youth of today have recognized their concrete identity. To struggle defines them, the empowered youth are the youth that dare to struggle—and dare to win.

—JUDY M. TAGUIWALO,
faculty regent,
University of the Philippines,
jmtaguiwalo@gmail.com

GMA outplaying P-Noy?

I HAVE been wondering why a Truth Commission needs to be formed to prove our inhibitions about the alleged graft and corruption of the previous administration. I thought that the president has enough power and authority to do dispose to achieve this and file the necessary charges against Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, if she is found guilty.

The news report titled "Bill Truth vs GMA campaign 'hindered'" (Inquirer, 11/11/12) hurt me no end, therefore, I don't understand this administration's seeming inability and helplessness to seek the necessary information and evidence. I am not a lawyer, but I guess I don't understand the convoluted workings of the government and the law.

It seems that President Aquino and his minions begin to take flak, so the powers to be are hands on the blackmailing issue of GMA. She appears to have played a wonderful chess game where she has managed to set up moves to move ahead of the current administration. She planned well and her machinations are, in a way, worthy of admiration. "GMA reminds me of the cunning character in Machiavelli's book "Prince...cunning genius." It is hoped that this is a temporary victory for her, and truth will win.

—ARTHUR HUAG,
huagarthur@yahoo.com

Court releases Trillanes

From page A1

dres. Trillanes walked out of the detention facility into a waiting an ancient mural at reporters.

President Aquino has issued an amnesty proclamation for his ex-boss, as well as that of other members of his group, Congress has concurred in the proclamation.

If Trillanes' aide said the senator's camp hoped his application for amnesty would be approved while he was out on provisional liberty.

In a statement, Trillanes said: "I would like to express my gratitude once again to President Aquino and those who made this amnesty possible."

"Likewise, I thank my family, friends and supporters who patiently stood by us through the long and difficult journey," he said. "Finally, to our countrymen, be assured of our unwavering commitment to selflessly serve our country."

Sen. Cesar Magsino told the inquirer that the Makati RTC Branch 149 under Judge Oscar Pimentel, which is hearing Trillanes' coup d'état case, issued the release order last Thursday afternoon.

In July 2003, Trillanes and more than 300 officers staged a short lived takeover of the Oakwood apartments in Makati City to denounce alleged corruption in the military and demand Arroyo's resignation.

While in detention, Trillanes won a Senate seat in the May 2007 elections, ranking 11th with 11 million votes.

In November 2007, Trillanes and former brig. Gen. Danilo Lim walked out of their trial in Makati and holed up at the Peninsula Manila hotel for seven hours. They called the breach a walkdown.

Trillanes' lawyer, Sey Sobico, said the court granted the senator provisional liberty while his amnesty was being processed. With a report from Nikko Dizon

P-Noy, BSP defend new peso bills from critics

From page A1

private license going on," he told reporters.

"If I want to find a particular area, I look for a map or I go to the GPS," the President said, referring to the criticism that the reverse side of the new P500 bill portrays Malacañang's administration does in the wrong place.

He pointed out that the peso bill had a "faster measure of speed" as he noted that foreigners made them in a way that the country's history and aspirations were placed there.

"And then you put it on what? Two notes by 5 inches. Three vertical, maybe they want to do it in separate (ways)," he said.

Aquino asked whether there was a need to redesign or replace the bills, the President said: "I think the first objective is to make sure that the bill is secure."

Nitpicking

Presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda said that it was "very clear" some critics were just "nitpicking."

He said the things would leave it to the BSP Monetary Board and "monumental" money to explain to those questioning the bills.

Deputy BSP Gov. Diwa Guinigundo defended the artistic renditions of Philippine maps appearing on the 1000, P500, P200, P100, P50 and P20 paper money, which excluded the Batanes islands near Taiwan and misplaced some of the country's topographic shores.

"If we want to make the Philippine map detailed specific and accurate, we would have had to draw all 7,100 islands," Guinigundo said in a radio interview.

Tubbataha Reefs

"What we wanted to do was showcase the general location of all those important parts of the Philippines," he said.

May makers, including one of the experts drafted to delineate the boundaries of the Tubbataha Reef national park in 1996, have pointed out that the spectacular coral formation was misplaced by hundreds of kilometers.

The Central Bank's interval shipping the bills in banks last Friday and those should be publicly available by Christmas.

Blue-naped parrot

Guinigundo also defended the replacement of a rare native bird, the blue-naped parrot, on the new P500 bill, saying it was patronized after the yellow color scheme of the denomination.

The 9931 Bird Club of the Philippines, a bird watcher organization, has insisted the yellow-headed parrot on the new bill does not exist anywhere in the country, since its real life the blue-naped parrot has a red head.

Three-year research

"It took us three years to research (the design)," Guinigundo said, brushing off allegations of slipshod preparation.

The head of the National Historical Institute was not available to the bank's spokesmanic committee, he added.

"Our local artists who designed our six denominations also did research and they consulted many of our experts in the Philippines," he explained.

More important than the designs are the new bills' security features to make them duplication by counterfeiters machines difficult, Guinigundo said.

It is not the first time the central bank has launched redesigned currency bills. It was forced in 2003 to withdraw bills that misspelled the name of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as "Gloria Arroyo."

Restaurants

The 2005 bill became a much sought after collectors' item.

In Lagonoy City, the regional council in Bicol, Manila Ong the vanilla expects the new P100 bill featuring Mayon and the whole shark is further boost the environment industry to Bicol.

"The P100 bill featuring the [unintelligible] and the Mayon Volcano is a very good [illegible] for promotion. We expect that it will bring more tourists to Bicol in 2011 onwards," Research said on Sunday.

Dorothy Golle of the Albay Provincial Tourism and Cultural Affairs Office expressed the hope that local and foreign tourists would become more familiar with Mayon's location and visit the province.

Barasoain Church

In the City of Malolos, a Church official, who initiated in 2007 a campaign to reform the image of the Barasoain Church on the peso bills, has welcomed the inclusion of the church in the redesigned P500 bill.

Msgr. Angel Santiago, the parish priest of Barasoain Church, said the inclusion of the church's image in the new set of bills has given back to the church the honor and prestige it deserves. With reports from AFP, Ace M. Nassid, Inquirer South; Jera Dionio, Gerardo Reyes-Esguerra, Inquirer General Luna

ANNOUNCEMENT

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

CIRCULAR NO. 2010-005

TO : ALL EMPLOYERS

SUBJECT : GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDONATION OF PENALTIES FOR UNREMITTED OR DELINQUENT LOAN AMORTIZATIONS OF EMPLOYEES BY EMPLOYERS DUE ON OR BEFORE 01 APRIL 2010

Pursuant to the implementation of the Contributors Penalty Condonation Program for Employers, and the approval of the Penalty Condonation Program for Unremitted or Delinquent Loan Amortizations of Employees by Employers by the President of the Philippines on 03 June 2010, as recommended by the Social Security Commission (SSC) under Resolution No. 2010-0120 dated 20 March 2010, the following guidelines and procedures are hereby issued:

I. WHO CAN AVAIL OF THE PROGRAM

1. Employers who are delinquent in the remittance of loan employees' loan amortizations, including the following:

1.1 Those with pending or approved proposal under the Installment Payment Scheme of the SSS;

1.2 Those with pending or approved application under the Program for Acceptance of Properties Offered through Dation-en-Pago of the SSS; and

1.3 Those with pending cases before the SSC, Courts or the Office of the Prosecutor.

2. Employers with employees with delinquent loans/arrears.

3. Employers who are also delinquent in the payment of their SSS contributions must first settle their delinquent contributions or be through outright payment or execution of an installment proposal under the SSS Condonation Law of 2009 (R.A. No. 9903).

II. WHAT ARE THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The Program shall apply only to penalties on unremitted or delinquent loan amortizations (principal and interest) due on or before 01 April 2010.

Interest is computed based on the interest rate of 10% per annum. It is defined as the amount due on the loan until its full settlement. In case of the expiry of the two-year loan amortization period, interest is computed from month-to-month up to the filing of application for condonation under this Program.

Penalties on loan amortizations falling due thereafter shall not be covered by the Program but shall be paid as prescribed under existing guidelines.

2. Period of the Program

Availment of the Program is within six (6) months from the issuance of the corresponding offline issuances.

3. Restoration of loan privileges

Upon remittance of the delinquent loan amortizations in full or approval of the installment proposal of the employer under this Program, the short-term member loan privileges of their employees shall be restored, subject to the existing guidelines on salary loan granting. However, said privileges shall again be suspended in the event of violation of any terms and conditions hereof.

4. Loan amortizations paid before effectivity of the program

Employers who settled on their loan amortization arrears before the effectivity of the Program shall not have their past penalties waived and refunded. Since application of payments is on penalty and interest first, payments to penalties can no longer be availed of. This affects the policy on contribution arrears payments are applied to principal first.

Those who settled their arrears partially before the effectivity of the Program should pay the balance in full or in installment under the Program for their accrued penalties corresponding to said remaining arrears to be waived.

5. Effect on pending or approved proposals under the Installment Payment Scheme of the SSS

Upon remittance of the delinquent loan amortizations in full or approval of the installment proposal of this employer under this Program, a pending or approved proposal submitted under other rules issued by the SSC allowing employers to pay their delinquencies in installment shall be considered withdrawn and the corresponding post-dated checks submitted shall be returned.

6. Effect on pending or approved application under the Program for Acceptance of Properties Offered through Dation-en-Pago of the SSS

Upon remittance of the delinquent loan amortizations in full or approval of the installment proposal of this employer under this Program, a pending application submitted under other rules issued by the SSC allowing employers to settle their delinquencies through dation-en-pago shall be considered withdrawn.

Further, upon submission of an installment proposal by an employer under this Circular, an approved dation en pago application submitted under such other rules shall be considered annulled if the title of the property has not been transferred yet to the SSS.

7. Effects of failure to remit or default in installment

In case the employer fails to remit in full the required delinquent loan amortizations or defaults in the payment of any installment under the approved proposal within the period provided therein, the penalties are deemed re-imposed on the remaining balance of the amount due after payments made under the approved installment proposal under this Condonation Program has been considered, to accrue until the delinquent account is paid in full.

III. HOW TO AVAIL OF THE PROGRAM

1. Modes of availing the Program

An employer has the following modes of availing this Program:

1.1 Remit within the period of the Program the full amount of delinquent loan or portion it or here through any SSS Branch or any banking facility or authorized collection agent of the SSS; or

1.2 Submit a proposal within the period of the Program to pay the delinquent loan amortizations or installment to the SSS Branch having jurisdiction over its place of business.

In any case, the employer shall first secure a loan delinquency report from its servicing branch for reconciliation and confirmation, and as basis for payment. Upon payment or submission of an installment proposal, or shall also submit the corresponding Collection List (SS Form-R1-2) within the period of the Program.

2. Installment Proposals

If the employer opts to submit an installment proposal, the Head of the SSS Branch to which the proposal was submitted shall give the employer a period of the same within four (4) working days from date of submission, subject to the following requirements:

Together with the proposal, the employer shall submit an instrument promising to pay the balance of the delinquency in equal monthly installment within a period not exceeding twenty-four (24) months from the date of the approval of the proposal.

The first monthly installment shall fall due on the 10th day of the succeeding month after the approval of the proposal.

The installment payments shall bear an interest of three percent (3%) per annum based on a Schedule to be issued by the SSS.

If the employer is an association, partnership, corporation or any other institution, its managing head, director or partner shall sign the proposal and the promissory note, attesting therewith the Secretary's Certificate in case of a corporation or an equivalent instrument in case of an unincorporated entities, authorizing such officer to sign the proposal on behalf of the employer.

In case the employer has already ceased its operations, its managing head, director or partner shall sign the proposal and the promissory note in his personal capacity.

3. Post-approval Requirements

Upon approval of the proposal, the employer has the following obligations:

3.1 It shall issue the corresponding post-dated checks payable to the SSS to cover all monthly installments, and issue the replacement thereof whenever necessary (e.g., change in check signatory, closure of account). The employer shall issue a separate set of post-dated checks payable to SSS if the employer also has an approved installment proposal under the SSS Condonation Law (R.A. No. 9903).

3.2 It shall remit current loan amortizations of its employees every month as they fall due.

Failure by the employer to comply with the above requirements shall automatically terminate the approved installment proposal and shall have the same effect as in case of default in the payment of any installment under the approved proposal.

All other provisions of existing rules and regulations not covered by the Circular shall continue to be observed and implemented.

Please be guided accordingly.

28 June 2010

Address: SSS Main Building, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
E-mail: member_relations@sss.gov.ph • Web Site: http://www.sss.gov.ph

Noy orders probe

From page A1

the workers fell that gutted the five-story Bed and Breakfast Inn, now hosting several dozen recovering guests of the Department of Social Welfare and Development in Galaxie, who were to take the bursting tests on Sunday.

Mr. Aquino said he was satisfied that the hotel located near the Tagaytay City hall had not undergone inspection and had no mayor's permit to operate. He said the victims were trapped in the upper floors because of combustible materials on the ground floor.

Mr. Aquino said investigators were pointing to an electrical short circuit.

"We approved the electrical plan. This should be investigated ... Bolinao line, there were those who did not do what should be done to prevent the tragedy," he said reporters. "They have to do something so that will not happen again."

The President directed the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to coordinate with Justice Secretary Leila de Lima in the investigation of the fire described by residents as the worst in Mr. Tagaytan in years.

Beyond recognition

Most of the dead were burned beyond recognition and included the owners of the property, his wife and their two children and a house help. The rest of the 16 dead were Lu Salero morning graduates who were to take Sunday's licensure examination.

"We would like to know if there was negligence on the part of the fire department of the city. So we will find out if firefighters did the appropriate response," Robredo said in a statement.

The autonomous task force of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) will conduct the inquiry, said Robredo, whose department came under fire following a botched hostage rescue at Manila's Rizal Park on Aug. 23 in which eight Hong Kong tourists were killed.

Investigation was supposed by Fire Superintendent Jesus Fernandez, the provincial fire marshal of Cagayan province.

Robredo said the pension house did not have a valid fire safety inspection certificate.

"But it was given a mayor's permit to operate. So we will demand an explanation from Mayor Jeffrey Ting why it happened," Robredo said.

He added that he was conferring with Dr. De Lima on any liability of the building's owners.

Reminder to marshals

Robredo said he issued a memorandum circular on Monday that reminded local government officials and fire marshals nationwide of the need to comply with the Fire Code.

He warned that local officials who failed to follow the Fire Code could face administrative and criminal charges including violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and grave dereliction of duty.

"We welcome the investigation because it would clarify things. Administrative and criminal charges would be filed if it would be proven that the owners violated any of the firefighters committed negligence of duty," said Undersecretary Rolando Bandilla Jr.

He said the BFP was obliged by law to conduct periodic inspections of establishments to monitor compliance with the Fire Code.

Initial reports said that the fire could have been caused by an electrical short circuit at a motorcycle parts shop at the latter's ground floor.

General bearing gifts visits wounded rebel

From page A1

with seven other officers and escorts, bringing with them two sacks bearing food packages wrapped in green and red, some cash assistance, and a promise to help with his medical needs.

"We are ready to help," Maharam assured Dwil and his children, who was attending to him at Sursogon (Sursog) Provincial Hospital in Sursogon City.

Ryzyl's comrade, Elmer Escobido, alias Ka Rivon, who was also nursing two bullet wounds, silently watched the unconditionary gesture of a sworn enemy from a nearby bed.

The government and the communist-led National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) have agreed on a 19-day ceasefire, which started on Dec. 16 and will end on Jan. 3, as they prepare for the resumption of peace talks in Norway, possibly in February, to end Asia's longest running Maoist insurgency.

So far, the ceasefire is holding, according to the Armed Forces of the Philippines Southeastern Command in Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. No new NPA ambuscades have been reported.

But soldiers are vigilant following the 0830 attack on an Army squad in a remote village in Lia Sioma, Northern Sursogon, two days before the ceasefire. Six soldiers and a 9-year-old boy were killed while two other soldiers were wounded.

Best Christmas gift

Touched by the visit of the top Army officer in the region, Dwil said he considered the occasion the best Christmas gift in his life.

"I thank the soldiers for saving my life. This is probably the best Christmas for me as I am with my family," he said.

With his arrest, he said, he could probably find time to be with his four children who hardly recognize him as their father.

Dwil said the soldiers suspected his basic rights and even brought him immediately to the hospital. Some soldiers even donated blood for the wounded rebels.

An Army report said Palmacruz gave orders to his men to ensure that Dwil and Escobido receive the right medical attention after they were moved from Barcelona town to Sursogon, where the clash occurred, on the capital city.

Reports said two other rebels, known only as "Ka Sioma" and "Esther," were killed in the encounter that took place in the early morning of Dec. 7 in Sursogon's last border.

Surrender option

"I personally came here to tell you that I stand to help you get back to mainstream society by formally surrendering to the government, but our rear commander here can be our partners in our drive to convince your other comrades to peacefully surrender," Palmacruz told Dwil.

Dwil, who will be turning 24 on Dec. 24, remained hesitant, saying he needed "more time to weigh his options." He said his family must be top priority now.

His wish is for his children to live normal lives in his village. Soon, where the clash occurred, another ceasefire.

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Low morale

Of course, our soldiers are saddened by what happened on Sunday. I told them that they should not relax even if there is a suspension of military offensive operations," Torres said.

He said the military would honor the government's ceasefire agreement with the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) even as he accused the rebels of "inhumanity."

"It seems they're really not serious in the peace talks," he said. He also expressed doubt on the CPP leadership's ability to enforce the ceasefire among all its guerrilla forces.

"There are some previously where there are violations [of the ceasefire] so not all the commanders up to the last do-nothing are to be very vigilant during the suspension of military operations," Torres said.

He said the AFP fully supported the peace negotiations. "We will honor every commitment of the government as part of the peace process," he said. *With reports from Rona Z. Panadigan in Manila*

Mike A sent 'Inquirer 8' to jail

From page A1

Renato Cayetillano, associate editor for readership; Jorge Sytan, opinion editor; Artemio Engracia, news editor; Pete Gentileza Bandayrel Jr., assistant editor; and myself, a senior desk editor—the core of the News Desk and Opinion section.

We were respondents in a P22-million libel suit (Criminal Case Nos. 07-15 [368 to 72]) that Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo filed in 2006—among the many cases he lodged against a total of 68 journalists critical of his activities as "First Gentleman."

Smuggling

The libel arose from several columns written by Ramon Tulfo about the alleged smuggling activities of Vicky Toh, Mike Arroyo's favorite secretary and accountancy who had been romantically linked to him. Toh was among those linked to smuggling of a previous Senate hearing.

We took the suit in stride, accepting it as part of the territory.

Shirley Gimena of the Inquirer administration service handled bundles of press bills for the board—P50,000 for each respondent.

The cash hoard did not keep us from jail. In almost half-past 5 p.m., we were told to leave our of the venue suit. We did not go to the court. Instead, in a convoy, we went to Police Station 10 on the corner of Sen. Luis and Jesus Streets, about 2 to 3 kilometers from City Hall.

Wet market

It turned out that the station, right above a talipapa (small wet market), would be our detention center.

Lawyers Purificacion, our lawyers, explained to us what was happening. After the libel case was raffled off, warrants of arrest were issued. "The prosecutor was influenced," he said.

Manila prosecutors led by a Chief Inspector Jimenez had tried to serve the arrest warrant on us at the Inquirer editorial office in Makati at 2:25 p.m., but would leave hours before its quezon security guard.

Roll call

At about 4 p.m. the names of the respondents were called out one by one by a Pateñero station police officer seated at the service desk with a mobile cop.

By instinct, having covered various courts before I joined the news desk, I pulled out my notebook and ball pen and began taking notes.

"Professionally, you placed yourself under the custody of the police. Based on the [arrest] warrant, I have to book you. You are detained," Senior Insp. Mar Reyes, chief of the antiterror section, said in a tone where we had been ordered into.

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Petty thieves

Within spitting distance from others we stayed were a cell holding a woman charged on the first. Twelve men, including petty thieves, were behind bars in an adjoining cell.

It was a very warm day and we were perspiring a lot.

HIGHLIGHTS Senior desk editor Jose Sarmiento Jr. raises a fist as top inquirer editors leave the Manila Police District (MPD) headquarters on Ubi Avenue.

"I will issue a certification of detention. Without the certification, you will not be released," the lady lawyer said while sitting before a computer in the room connecting about 20 square meters that also served as a dining area for police personnel.

Two other respondents—editor-in-chief Letty Magsanoc and Tulfo—were not with us. Magsanoc called to ask. She and Tulfo paid the cash bond the next day.

Reyes said the "Inquirer 8" could not go out of the station until there was a ruling on the case.

By that time, the station was crawling with reporters, photographers from different media organizations and TV crews covering the goings-on of the inquirer, who had become the news themselves.

Even Senator Panfilo Lacson, then Mayor Lito Atienza's arch rival, was under pressure from higher ups to consider us to be

HOLDING Former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante takes his oath at the hearing of the Senate blue ribbon committee on the fertilizer scam on Nov. 13, 2008.

"Come on! You've got to be funny, or else we're going to be left behind," my colleagues jokingly told the driver. We rode like a jockey out to win the Triple Crown.

Just at the bush near, specified on the speedometer as it reached 160 kilometers per hour, we were overtaken by a white Pajero. Without a hit 160, I held firmly on to my bag. As the dial went past 200 kph, I said a silent prayer. At that speed, it would be fatal if the vehicle hit a pothole.

Good thing the Pajero was still in tip-top shape that December night.

Pilots we stepped off the vehicle upon reaching Bolante's house at 10 p.m., the first thing I did was to wash. I appreciated the solid ground. I stared on the concrete for five minutes, thankful that nothing untoward occurred.

As panic subsided, my stomach grumbled. The last place you would want to make out without any food was Ayala. At

Chasing after Bolante story was no joy ride

From page A1

dent Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's election bid in 2004, had been charged with lying during a Senate hearing and ordered arrested.

The Senate sergeant at arms had rounded Bolante in his lawyer's Makati office and he was going back home to the rural Ayala subdivision to attend to a sick wife before being detained.

When news broke of the arrest yesterday being served, I hitched a ride with a colleague for the not so merry chase.

It was a Thursday, and I was finally hitting for our sports who took late day off. It's normally a busy day. At the end of my coverage, I normally looked forward to a nice hot meal, a good book or a movie and a good night's sleep.

Hell after a snooze

Those things didn't happen the day the arrest warrant was served on Bolante.

I had finished my writing chores at about 5:30 p.m., and the first thing I did after turning off my laptop was to hit the couch and doze off a bit.

After a 30-minute snooze, my phone rang. The news desk was on the other line: Bolante was holed up somewhere in Makati, and Senate agents were out to arrest him.

The instructions were to make out the building where Bolante was believed to be holing and follow him until he reached the Senate building in Pasay City. In between the developments, I was tasked to send breaking news.

For about an hour, reporters waited for Bolante, who never got from the office of his lawyers at past 9 p.m., turning into topless of queries while his counsel read a prepared statement.

The convoy proceeded to the Senate building where Bolante supposed to be allowed to go to his house and check on his wife who reportedly suffered a mild stroke. With a group of officers, Bolante went straight to Ayala-Alabang.

Horse race

It wasn't easy to get into the exclusive subdivision. Luckily, our Senate reporter referred me to her fellow beat reporter for a major radio station, who gave me a ride.

The chase was on. Things heated up when the convoy entered the Skyway.

Across the NATION

Abra elders want permit of mining firm nullified

BIR plan to collect corporate income tax from LGUs slammed

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—The Negros Occidental provincial government is opposing the plan of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) regional office to collect corporate income tax from local government units (LGUs), Provincial Legal Officer Jose Ma. Valencia said on Sunday.

Valencia was reacting to a letter from Araceli Francisco, BIR Revenue Region 12 regional director, directing the provincial government to register its proprietary activities for the purpose of corporate income taxation.

He added that the BIR also has plans to impose corporate income tax on other LGUs in the province.

In her letter, Francisco said the government or any of its political instrumentalities were not automatically exempt when they derive income from proprietary functions, citing the case of Bayani vs. Soreon.

"If a government agency is engaged in a business, industry or activity performed by other ordinary taxable corporations, then it is subject to income tax of the same rate with similar corporate entities," she said.

The proprietary activities of LGUs and other government agencies are subject to corporate income tax and value-added tax or percentage tax, Francisco said.

She said the provincial government should register its proprietary activities, comply with invoicing requirements and pay corresponding tax due to avoid the imposition of penalties for late payment.

But the provincial government disagreed with the BIR on the income taxation of LGUs. An LGU is a government instrumentality, it should be viewed differently from other government instrumentalities and government-owned and -controlled corporations because it is primarily governed by the Local Government Code, Valencia said.

The reference of the powers, functions and liabilities of the LGUs has to be taken within the paradigm of the 1987 Constitution and the Local Government Code, he said.

Under the Local Government Code, the corporate powers of an LGU were inherent, in line with the devolution policy and promotion of autonomy, Valencia pointed out.

"With the devolution of the functions of national agencies to the LGUs, the distinctions of proprietary and government functions have become obscured or nonexistent at most," Valencia said in a letter to Francisco dated Dec. 17.

He noted that the Local Government Code has mandated the LGUs to undertake almost all the functions of national agencies such as the Department of Health (operation of hospitals) and the Department of Tourism (promotion of tourist destinations).

An LGU "must be given a chance to earn its keep to finance its programs without unduly depending on its Internal Revenue Allotment. This is the essence of the provisions of the 1987 Constitution on local government autonomy," he said.

A contrary view would take away all incentives from LGUs to be self-reliant, he added.

VENETIAN NIGHT
Bagnis still couldn't grasp the mechanics for simulating snow, so it tried to simulate Venice instead for yuletide tourism. Government workers converted boats at Burnham Lake into lighted riverboats complete with a troubadour for P12-m Tacoronte rights.

Journalists assail GIs for threatening reporter

DAMBANGHA CITY—The "visitor" was not so friendly at all.

During Making Forces Agreement's review here Monday morning, an American soldier threatened to confiscate the video camera of a television journalist who was taking footage of the US military's temporary facility.

"I am ordering you not to take footage," the television reporter quoted one of the six US personnel as ordering just inside.

Insisting they were only doing their job, another reporter asked the bewildered soldier: "What is the basis of your order?"

"I don't understand you but don't make me take your camera," the soldier answered instead.

The journalists were covering the visit of retired Gen. Edilberto Adan, the executive director of the Visiting Forces Agreement Commission.

The television journalist was taking footage of Adan entering the Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines headquarters, a one-story building, when the American soldier stopped him.

Lt. Col. Randolph Cabangbang, spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command, said Adan's visit was in line with the VFA Commission's mandate to monitor the activities of foreign military and civilian personnel under the auspices of VFA.

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) condemned how the American forces treated the journalists.

"[US forces] have no right to order anyone not to shoot, much less threaten to seize the equipment, and they have no authority whatsoever since they are supposed to be visitors not sovereigns," NUJP spokesperson Jairus Espina said.

Even if a journalist covering the event is inside the military facility "and the AFP allowed the media [for coverage], the GIs still have no authority since these facilities remain in RP's territory," Espina said.

"The Americans have no jurisdiction at all. And even the local military generally have no authority to implement blanket prohibitions," he added.

Cabangbang, however, said the journalists were trapping on a secured facility "and persons going there need clearance."

"Shooting video or taking photos of the perimeter security set-up is prohibited as it might be used as reference in planning to breach the facility," Cabangbang said.

Earlier, Western Mindanao Command chief Lt. Gen. Raymundo Bitter said US facilities in the Philippines are basically temporary structures and operations are under control of the VFA Commission.

Cabangbang, however, said "while it is an area of their temporary stay, it needs to be secured including the periphery."

"We do not accept only the facilities of our officers but we also have the responsibility to ensure that the immediate surroundings are secured," he added.

Lt. Tony Captain Rebet Gonzalez, commander of the Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines, explained that taking videos without the approval of Western Mindanao Command officials was not allowed.

"No unapproved cameras is a common rule in military facilities," Gonzalez said.

He said he had spoken with the journalists about a Western Command approved role as the AFP's spokesman, S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

Gov to go after erring jail personnel

ALAMEL, Tarangnan—Gov. Miguel Dominguez vowed to crush the strike on erring jail personnel who failed to intercept three explosives smuggled inside the provincial jail in Tarangnan Saturday here.

On Tuesday morning, jail officials led by Jail Warden Renato Pantaleon conducted a search in one of the cells inside the Tarangnan Provincial Jail after receiving persistent reports that high-profile criminals managed to sneak in grenades inside the facility.

"Somebody tipped off that grenades were smuggled inside the jail. We tried to validate it and we arrested 9 a.m., Sunday, we recovered the explosives," Pantaleon told reporters here.

Pantaleon based that the grenades, wrapped in cellophane, was placed behind a metal bed in Cell No. 3.

He said that for two weeks they have been receiving intelligence reports that grenades were smuggled inside the detention facility.

Terror suspects

Some high-profile terror and criminal suspects are detained at the Tarangnan Provincial Jail, among them, rogue local Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) leaders Mohammad Kane and Fernando Galanding and Sumuddin Dassi, a civilian volunteer organization (CVO) member who was implicated in the grenade Maguindanao massacre.

The provincial government here has tightened security measures in the facility after the Mar. 4 escape of Mohammad Jaafar Maguid, a terror suspect.

The escape of Maguid led to the suspension of Pantaleon as jail warden, but he was back to his job after serving his penalty.

The police were suspicious, then, that the military even deployed a similar tactic to intercept the escape of the lucky after receiving intelligence reports that cellmates of the detained suspects were planning to spring them out of jail.

SPO1 Israel Lantogan, investigator of Alabel Police Station said only two "cacao-type" grenades were recovered inside the toilet bowl while the other one was confiscated in the possession of an inmate on Saturday.

Dominguez was happy that the jail management "frustrated the escape try of high-profile detainees."

He said he has no doubt that the smuggled explosives would be used by the high-profile inmates in their planned escape.

Aquilles Z. Zonio, Inquirer Mindanao

Bulacan chapel has new bell but parishioners long for old ring

PLARIDEL, Bulacan—Jun Galvez, a second generation bell ringer at the Catholic chapel in Barangay Culianan here, took to his duty on the second day of Simbang Gabi here on Friday, pulling the rope of a new church bell to call parishioners to Mass.

But Galvez, 55, said his happiness was incomplete. The bell pealing that dawn did not sound as sweet as the century-old bell it replaced.

Their chapel lost its century-old bell on Nov. 8. It was one of several Bulacan churches that had been victimized by thieves.

The oldest bell is 200 years old and was stolen from a church in Guiguinto town.

For some of these churches, the first Simbang Gabi was too quiet. But other parishioners no longer pine for their missing bells.

Like the Culianan chapel's devotees, many posted their resources to buy new ones to those for the Valenzo and are now more committed in raising funds to meet the full payments for the new bells.

Gloria Mercancio, 81, the Culianan chapel's caretaker for more than 30 years now, said parishioners pooled P9,000 to advance the payment for the new bell worth P58,000 in time for the nine-day Simbang Gabi. She said the parish still needed to raise P51,000 to cover the balance for the new bell.

"We decided to acquire a new bell in time for Simbang Gabi, as dimensions started coming in from devotees here until we [were able to] raise P9,000. We used this money for the purchase of a new bell," said Mercancio.

However, we are still in need of cash to pay the bell maker the balance of our purchase. We hope anybody who has a good heart and extra cash can help us fulfill our obligation," she added.

Parishioners entrusted parishioners when the new bell arrived at Culianan, said Antonio Lacsamana, another caretaker of the chapel.

"People competed for the opportunity to ring the new bell. When it pealed, they were ecstatic and proud to have a new church bell. After that, they prepared to go to to church," Lacsamana said.

But Galvez still longed for the old bell. "The old bell sounded better and its pealing can be heard farther. We are not that happy because we miss our old bell. But we cannot do anything; we can get used to this bell," he said.

Like Culianan, three other communities bought new bells from N.B. Metalcraft in Bulacan town.

Mimi Nicolas, one of the firm's supervisors, said the company manufactures bronze bells and was approached by church officials and lay leaders whose chapels were victimized by robbers this year.

He said N.B. Metalcraft replaced the bells of churches in the towns of Bulakan and Bustos and Malolos City.

Senior Supt. Fernando Mabanera, Bulacan police director, said the churches in Obando and San Jose del Monte City have been added to a list of towns recruited by bell thieves. He said many of the incidents had not been reported to the police.

But Fr. Rolando de Leon, parish priest of Marilao town, said records from the Catholic Church in Bulacan showed that bells in at least 12 churches in the province had been stolen this year. Carmela Reyes-Refuerzo, Inquirer Central Luzon

Devance paces PBA Top Performer derby

By Jasmin W. Paya

TERRIFIC TRIO missing his big Alfa back.

But on the court, Joe Devance makes sure that his game gets all the attention.

Devance, Alaska's 6'6 All-Asia stockbuster, has taken the lead in the fight race for the top individual award as the PBA Philippine Cup heads into the final stretch.

"He's by far the most versatile player in the league," said Alaska coach Tim Cone. "He's match-up hell for the other teams."

With impressive averages of 18.2 points, 8.9 rebounds, 3.3 assists and 1.2 blocks per game, the 6-foot-9 forward recorded an average of 35.57 statistical points (SP) in 14 games to pass the Rain or Shine PBA Elite Top Performer board.

Hot in strong contention are San Miguel Beer's Arwind Santos, who's less than a point behind with a 34.79 SP followed by Talk 'N Text forward Harvey Carey with 34.57 SP.

The long-limbed Santos averaged 16.6 points, 9.1 rebounds, 1 steal and 1.2 blocks, while the burly Carey notched a double-double of 12.4 markers and 12.9 boards.

Their teammates also headed to the top five with San Miguel's Jay Washington amassing 33.77 SP and Talk 'N Text's Kelly Williams coming 30.43 SP.

Cone said Devance, the top rookie pick in 2007, has the ability "to read defenses and his teammates with aplomb."

"He's able to look at the game and decide how he help the team," he added.

Rounding out the top 10 are Talk 'N Text's Jimmy Alapag, top rookie performer Rabeh Al-Hussaini of Air21, Sinchetic's Willie Miller, Ino Miguel's Brandon Rosenvonn and Talk 'N Text's Ali Peek.

DEVANCE

SANTOS

Pierce powers Celts to 13th straight win

BOSTON—Paul Pierce had his seventh career triple-double and Boston extended its NBA-winning streak to 13 games by holding off the Indiana Pacers, 99-88, on Sunday.

Pierce finished with 18 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds for his first triple-double since 2006, and the Celtics got a boost from the return of Shaquille O'Neal, who had 11 points after missing four straight games with a sore right calf.

Ray Allen added 18 points, scoring 12 in the second half, and Kevin Garnett finished with nine points and nine rebounds for the Celtics, who improved to 12-1 at home.

Danny Granger led Indiana with 16 points. Roy Hibbert added 15 points and 14 rebounds for the paltry Pacers, who hung with the Celtics until the final few minutes.

The Pacers made just 39 of 96 shots, but only had 15 turnovers to Boston's 18 and were almost able to keep up with the bigger Celtics in rebounding.

In Toronto, Rajon Rondo scored 20 points, Ron Artest had 19 and the Los Angeles Lakers won their fifth straight game with a 120-110 victory over the Raptors.

Andrew Bynum had 16 points and Shannon Brown 14 for the Lakers, who finished a seven-game road trip at 6-1 and have won eight of nine overall.

Marc Gasol had 22 and Lamar Odom 21 for the Lakers.

Los Angeles is 11-3 away from home, the most road wins in the NBA.

Bryant started despite a sprained right ankle that he hurt in the closing quarters of Friday's win at Philadelphia.

In Newark, New Jersey, Devin Harris had 22 points and eight assists, and Brook Lopez added 16 points, as every the New Jersey Nets (8-16) beat Atlanta (17-12) in Newark (the season, having scored a 107-101 overtime victory Nov. 23.

The Hawks lost for the fourth time in six games. AP

OTHER RESULTS: Pistons 111, Hornets 108; 101, Wizards 102; Bulls 92, Suns 113; Thunder 119

PHOENIX Suns forward Grant Hill attempts a jumper against Oklahoma City's Kevin Durant. AP

Blue Birds settle for 4th in HK caging

THE PHILIPPINE varsity team tagged as the Blue Birds absorbed a 61-42 beating against the Hong Kong national team to settle for fourth place in the 19th Hi-Gold Super Hang Heung Cup in Hong Heung.

The host squad had the game in control early against the Jockey Blue Birds, who relay earlier had a tough semifinal outing versus eventual champion Southern California Pokémon Association (SCPA) of the United States.

Boastered by lanky African-Americans, the SCPA captured the title after routing China's Xin Cheng Holdings, 91-78, in the finals of the only tournament Sunday night at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium.

The Blue Birds, a mix of cagers from three-time UAAP champion Ateneo and Adamson, fell short of surpassing the second place finish of another local varsity team in 2008.

The Cebu Schools Athletic Association Inc. (Gerald Anderson) team, then led by University of Cebu's Edwin Asoro and Jaypee Ejandra, entered as runner-up taken after losing to Hong Kong, 100-61, in the finals.

The Blue Birds, relying on Rich Leagi's consistent game, posted a 2-1 elimination record to place second in their group and advance to the Round Four of the six-team tournament.

But the Blue Birds also proved to be a challenge for the SCPA, who crushed all opponents in double-figures—before bowing to the Americans in a six-point semifinal decision, 91-85.

Ateneo earned the right to represent the country as an automatic for making the Philippine Collegiate Champions league recently.

Guerrero said finishing fifth again or better is unacceptable.

"I'm confident that our performance in the next SEA Games will be better," he said. "We have more time to prepare."

A lot will depend, however, on the events that host Indonesia will subvenue for the SEA Games.

"I honestly believe that our athletes will be better prepared," said Garcia. "We have to start early and do away with cramming."

ELS

Els takes South African Open by one shot

DURBAN—South Africa's Ernie Els held off a strong finish from compatriot Retief Goosen to secure a one-shot victory at the South African Open on Sunday.

Els claimed his fifth South African Open title thanks to a final round six-under-par 63 to finish on 20 under 277 at the Durban Country Club in the 100th edition of the tournament.

Goosen could not halt Els's charge to victory as he also carded a final round six-under-par 63 to end on 279 under par.

Els looked to have shot the closer as Goosen clambo to a tumbling 15-foot putt which narrowed it to an eagle on the 525-yard par-five 14th hole.

The eagle helped Els to a four-shot lead with two holes to play but Goosen hit back as he birdied the 16th, 17th and 18th holes but the 41-year-old Els failed to never to close out the victory with four consecutive pars.

Els may have walked off with the 1,000,000-euro ($221,000) first prize but he told Goosen trails him work hard.

"I knew Retief was going to come hard but I didn't know he would be that tough," Els, ranked 12th in the world, said. Reuters

ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES

Kapitingpiti at Kadakilaan, Ang ay Kawal Pilipino para sa Inang Bayan

Heroism, gallantry and bravery has pervaded throughout the History of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Today, at the celebration of its 75 years existence, we commemorate a tip-top history of service service to the Filipino nation, and we look forward to a new future of stronger partnership and collaboration with the Filipino people.

From admirable display of courage and fearlessness by our firefighters, the kalipunan: who fought to liberate us from the oppressors, the passion of the first soldiers, now veterans, who fought in different wars throughout the world in defense of the principles of freedom and liberty, to the new Filipino soldier fighting a new form of warfare against emerging threats in peace and security - one story remains constant. The Filipino soldier, with all his efforts and sacrifices throughout the history of the country, remains a hero in all sense of the word.

We are now charting new courses in the history of the Philippines in the 21st century and as we look beyond, we ask our countrymen to join hands with us in ensuring that the future be deprived of terror and violence, and be filled with peace. And as we step into the future, we assure our fellow Filipinos that the heroism, gallantry, the bravery, and the sacrifice of our soldiers in the Armed Forces of the Philippines will never waiver.

Sports agency eyes Top 3 finish at SEA Games

By Jane Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE Sports Commission is going for a top three finish in the 2011 Southeast Asian Games.

PSC chair Richie Garcia yesterday said the goal is achievable since the performance level of the national team has improved and the agency now enjoys a closely knit relationship with the Philippine Olympic Committee.

"We're really serious on improving our performance in the previous SEA Games," said Garcia. "So be honest, our target is in Basilio in the top 3."

Team Philippines wound up fifth overall in the 2009 Laos Games with 36 gold, 33 silver and 51 bronze medals.

Garcia said finishing fifth again or lower is unacceptable.

"I'm confident that our performance in the next SEA Games will be better," he said. "We have more time to prepare."

A lot will depend, however, on the events that host Indonesia will subvenue for the SEA Games.

"I honestly believe that our athletes will be better prepared," said Garcia. "We have to start early and do away with cramming."

Xavier, St. Jude trounce rivals

XAVIER SCHOOL whipped Chiang Kai Shek College, 104-84, to kick off its title-contention bid in the juniors division of the Prospo Metro Manila Tiong Lian Basketball Association tournament at the St. Jude Catholic School gym in Manila over the weekend.

Jesse Ting fired 34 points to pace the bolder Bullions. The World Youth Games veteran also contributed 11 boards, eight assists and five steals in 33 minutes of play to snare the Prospo Player of the Game plum.

Other Bullions who scored in double figures were Chase Tan and Cazzar Angelo Wong-Sulaiong who combined for 23 points.

Wong-Sulaiong also helped console Chiang Kai Shek cop gunner Paul Ashonse in the first half which saw the bolder Bullions erect a 55-38 during interval.

Following Chiang Kai Shek's loss, St. Jude grabbed the sole lead after downing St. Stephen's High School, 84-75.

Jason Ligad and Ravi Ey enjoyed for 31 and 23 points, respectively, giving St. Jude, runners up to Xavier in the last two years, its second straight win.

Ligad converted 7 of 11 attempts from the three-point area while Ey shot 9-of-9 from the same distance. George Llavores, Conde Batac

Azkals, Ramero grace PSA Forum

THE AZKALS F PSA Forum ends 20-10 with victory as the Philippines Azkals lead Ramero in special guests appearing in the final session of the year at Shakey's U.N. Ave. today.

Accompanying the Azkals at the public sports program to be aired live over Sports Radio 918 and presented by United Coolers, Pepper and Shakey's, are team manager Dan Palami, coach Simon Mckeogh and Philippine Football Federation head Mariano Araneta.

Adding luster to the session are Manila Shaker team owner Mikee Romero, former senator Nikki Coseteng and Dominican-Belgian Consul General Peque Pagsa.

Along with coach Jinoo Palarong and team manager Richard Cruz, Romero will talk about the Sharks' back-to-back championships in the Baseball Philippines league and his effort to help the national baseball team's campaign for the 2011 SEA Games in Jakarta.

Coseteng and Lozada will discuss their next attempt at breaking the Guinness record for the most number of swimmers in a nonstop 24-hour marathon relay.

'We lost the battle but we earned a lot of respect'

Indonesia federation gives out big bonus

By Cedrill P. Tejon

JAKARTA—As Far as team manager Dan Palicad and coach Simon McMenemy are concerned, there is no reason for the Philippines to be disappointed after Undefeated ended its magical run in the Asean Football Federation Suzuki Cup semifinals here Sunday night.

"We may have lost the battle, but we earned a lot of respect from the other teams," said Palicad, who has handpicked the team since last year.

"The Filipino players will be disappointed but if they think about their journey to get here, I am sure they will feel proud," said Makkaraong.

The Filipinos pushed the Indonesians to the limit but were left undone by a last-minute goal from Indonesia's Bangkanon bun-volley Cristian Gonzales to mark of the two-leg semifinals.

Gonzales broke deadlock from the game-winner in the first leg and repeated his heroics in the second match with a one-sided long-range strike to secure the victory for the Indonesians.

McMenemy said he is proud of the Philippine team, which overachieved in the tournament.

The Filipinos beat Vietnam, 2-0, and drew with finalist Ipsuak Singapore and Burma (Myanmar) to reach the semifinals.

Undefeated ask-scoring pass from Reno," said McMenemy. "They created chances against the run-of-play, we pushed the men forward, we changed our shape a little but it didn't work out in the end."

"The team are gutted as they made it the after losing is unofficial, but to get to where they've got to is an achievement," added the Filipino British coach.

He said the team will maybe now taken to some level to be able to contend again.

"When we were looking at that semi-finals, [but] we fell short," he said.

"I think that football has genuinely improved in the last week and that's what we do. There's no remaining tactic to how we play, we just gotta to eat, we get in there and

FILIPINO players celebrate after booking a historic win, 4-1, in Sunday night's second leg of the 4th Suzuki Cup semifinals match in Palembang. Indonesia defeated the Philippines 2-0 in the first leg of the match, but not at the end of their game played at the 87,000-capacity Bung Karno Stadium. —AFP

make it difficult for the other team, and try work to lead us on cup.

"I think that any football fan around the world can appreciate that."

After getting valuable exposure to this football stand, the Philippine Really chose the opportunities of Indonesian clubs after the match fell not 80,000 fans in Jakarta's Bung Karno Stadium Sunday night.

Mind-gestures from fans and team-mates were a welcome sight for those in the team has not headed back to the hotel, where young fans later mobbed the players, posing for pictures and seeking autographs.

THE INDONESIAN football team has received a massive bonus for beating the Philippines in the 2010 AFF Suzuki Cup semifinals.

The Indonesian soccer association PSSI has set aside the equivalent of $200,000, or about P12.48 million, for the team as coaching is a aspect ended by the Jakarta Post.

After Indonesia secured a place in the finals PSSI chief Nurdin Halid said he would hand over the bonus to the players.

The Indonesians will play the Malaysians in the finals—to meet on set 5-1 in the tournament's group stages—in the home-and-away finals which will begin in Kuala Lumpur on Dec. 26, with the second leg set in the Bung Karno Stadium in Jakarta on Dec. 29.

Indonesian coach Alfred Riedl admitted that his team suffered from nerves in the second half when they had to withstand a bombardment from the Filipinos.

"Our opponents made it very difficult for us to win the match," said Riedl. "They had a lot of set plays from throw-ins and corners and in the first time it was very dangerous for us."

The Austrian coach said Sunday's game was "probably our most difficult game" of the year against "because of how physically strong" the Filipinos are.

"For me they are like a Scandinavian team, not a Southeast Asian team," he said.

The Philippine team returned home from Jakarta last night.

—Reinier Hutchinson

You and P-Noy can make it happen

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

TERRIFIC JOB, they did not try to build the national football team, namely the Philippine "Azkals," the very different persons have been elderly regroup ourselves a national basketball squad be held to the international scene.

The Azkals, who celebrated Filipino pride and grace in their amazing rise in the Suzuki Cup, have shown it can be done.

The Azkals headed for win in South Asian football, the national squad catapult joint patriotic celebration.

Nobility ascension how far they could go in the tournament semifinals, the Azkals did not hesitate to take along a cause of opposition in the semifinals.

* * *

Oh, the Azkals dropped both duo matches in Jakarta, following a massive big price that had pushed them over by last July semifinals.

But, could the true-spirited coach of the over-flailing Smart-Gilas national basketball team, the Azkals did not finish groping for ability.

"You never, this team played solidly as a group and worked as hard as it could," said national football coach Simon Mckinnon.

The Azkals drew both four and respect from their opponents' fans, who were endlessly egged on by a 90,000-strong record of fanatical followers.

An amazing assembly of native sons and Filipino-Europeans, they failed to advance to the final, now to be contested by Indonesia and Malaysia.

* * *

They indeed fell short of their main intentions.

But in the process, the Azkals opponents, to remember's something proper.

It's like the Middle Eastern Globe basketball achievement, who often visited and got four-nation premiere, the Middle East semi-finals on an enviable national ever and classmates at the desk of hotels.

In the process, they've unceremoniously erased a corruption which all these years have bogged down Philippine sports.

* * *

Follow this, please, but after all last, have seen and said about the Azkals. It's now our turn to help further what these gallant crusaders have established.

Now that the Azkals have opened our eyes, it's our duty to help the unseen get rid of this crippling blind faith in basketball.

With the basketball, despite the debilitated, frailties exists, continues to be embraced here like religion, there should soon be a shifting of faith and priorities.

* * *

You see, this could have been exaggerated but, after the bright overtimers of the past few days, it must now be clear how we've all done has been over-stepping when god in basketball.

It's time to turn a new leaf make things happen.

In fact, if President Aquino is to make true of his crusade against corruption, he should find and see ways to make football more accessible and embraced by the masses.

It's not true that it can be done [illegible] in my own school.

After the little guys have been exposed, now is the time to move away from the basketball-plugging mould of basketball—doing. Only—into the new non-basketball fields of the lovable Azkals.

* * *

JOEVINO ADLES, "Pandesal" and others like Gee Abanilla (they "cost powerstroke Dennis Castillo. The culture like Gee, Eric Arguz, who opened voting in qualification to Mindanao-contested under the UAAP reign, will probably die by tournament"). Peter Jose Lorenz, goalscorer Simon from Brazil, Bolivarian. "Suggestion for the proposed PSC-PBL sports association: Why not the Philippine Air Base to open Clar Clark, a new social member member of Manila, big government property to send to my local"). —

SPORTSWATCH

Palmares tops NFGB Stag Derby

DETAILED gamefowl breeder Rizza Palmares, Jr. emerged as sole champion in the PCA-entry NFGB Clean-Up & Stag Derby last Friday.

Palmares' Bid Mabuhay entry racked up eight straight wins in the three-derby event held at the Iloilo Coliseum. Pinoy rounds were also staged in 20 other non-local assemblies.

Palmares is the president of the Bacolod Federation of Gamefowl Breeders and the Panay Gamefowl Breeders Association (Pagba).

Other participants with seven credits, six points and straight but cumbly marked points.

WTJ plans big derbies in Makati

PARTICIPANT-qualifying events kicks off soon at the WTJ Sports and Amusement Center in Makati.

The WTJ Employees 3-Cock Derby unfolds on Thursday with 3-pair entrance fee of P500,000. Entry fee is P10,000. Entries must be submitted to secretariat from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m.

A 5-cock derby headed by Jaycee Bong Garing comes next on Dec. 30.

Meanwhile, for entries supporting Sky Ranches 6-Cock Derby last week, Southeast Champs of Bacolod City, the Cabanlit-Sarao of Bulacan, Bono, 4 H. DL and Jan. 21 Jan Hacienda Bacolod.

Far Eastern billiards aces stun NCBL leader Saints

THE FEU Tamaraws celebrate their victory over pioneering St. Clare College.

RESURGENT Far Eastern U handed league-leading Saint Clare College its first loss with a 2-1 decision to climb to solo second in the National Collegiate Billiards League over the weekend at the Shin Billiards Center in Quezon City.

Coupled with their 3-0 sweep of Don Bosco-Mandaluyong on their first match and their walkover 3-0 shutout of Centro Escolar U, the Tamaraws rolled eight out of nine consensus points to boost their total to 20, just a point off the St. Clare leaders.

Andrew Ruiz led the Tamaraws' campaign by handing Bimby Gago his first loss in 9 outings via a 7-4 win. The tandem of Mark Lacay and Dwarino Inbo-tino had earlier given FEU a 1-0 edge after beating Richard Fernando and Wenzo Montero, 5-4, in 8-ball doubles.

Hector Castillo, still unscathed in 10-ball, play mobbed Lacay, 7-6, to secure an FEU shutout victory and keep the Saints at the helm of the event opposed by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Accel and Regent Billiards double.

The Saints later ousted their Far Eastern counterpart National University, 2-1.

Philippine Maritime Institute finished fifth and Don Bosco, but got whitewashed by Lyceans, 1-2, to slip down second to third with 27 points.

The Mil Billiards, tied with the University of the East Warriors for fourth with 26 points, rebounded with a 3-0 whitewash of Benna after scoring a 2-1 victory over Mapua.

The Warriors sprung up five points against Jose Rizalistas and La Salle but went down, 1-2, to Jose Rizal University, which ended fifth with 35 points.

The Bombers also clamped Adamson and San Beda on similar 3-0 scores.

Letran, scoring seventh with 22 points, entered past La Salle, 3-0, but followed against University of Santo Tomas and Perpetual, dropping 1-2 decisions.

The Tigers also posted a 2-1 win over Silliman University to force Battalion of Manila, 2-1, to stay at 19 points in the event organized by Rony Montano of Happy Promotions and Bob de Leon of Accel.

—Ray Joanico

GM EMBUZO took board one derby.

Manila's NCAA champions rule Inter-Cities chessfest

By Ric Lozada

BAGUIO CITY—College of St. Benilde Manila leaned on Joel Finneran and Aaron Biteon in the last two rounds to win the 2012 National Inter-Cities and Miami Qualifier Rapid Chess Team Championships at the Pinsalir Inn, conducted here Sunday.

Finneran leaned Mod Joseph Ecuguero and Biteon defeated James Mercado as reigning NCAA champion St. Benilde stunned Local Hosts Colegio Administracion Gabriela (CAG) 2.5-1.5, in the ninth and final round to amass 16 points on seven wins and two draws in the event organized by the Knights Chess Federation of the Philippines in cooperation with the Baguio city government.

The final-round triumph and their eighth-round 2-2 draw with Cotabato CAG's Global-B in the eighth-round duo assuring one of the Manila campaigners—ranked just 10th among 41 teams that competed—and recorded them with the top purse of P15,000.

Finneran and Biteon also saved the day for St. Benilde-Manila in the eighth round when they won over Biteo and Jeanson Lim, respectively, compensating for the collapse of top board player Rolando Andador, who suffered back-to-back losses to International Master Ronald Dalogdog and GM Darwin Laylo.

It was a reversal of form for Andador who clamored IM Chito Garma in St. Benilde-Manila's dispatch Ramon Feliciano, 3.5-0.5, in the seventh round.

IM Jayson Gonzales, Wesley So and Don Glo-Dumlao are Cap. led by Daniel Quizon, drawn second with 14 points.

The 17 year-old Filipino-Dutch Stalwart and Chito Garma before settling for a draw with IM Henry Tendero of Columbia-CAG to Global-B in the final round.

So, the country's highest rated player ever who was invited to play in the tournament by NSCA chess Ronnie Bituin(ss), crossed six wins versus zero and two draws, finished second over gold contender Tendero, who finished with eight wins against a loss.

Editor Rodolfa S. Mañalac
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

SPORTS

EVEN: Calipdog presses the attack over a fallen Indonesian goalkeeper Markus Horison in Sunday's second-leg match —

Asean clubs seeking top Filipino booters

Younghusband, De Jong, Borromeo on wish lists

By Cedelf F. Tejan

JAKARTA—The Philippines' sterling run to the Asean Football Federation Suzuki Cup has prompted leading Southeast Asian clubs to take notice of the country's finest players.

Striker Phil Younghusband, midfielder Jason de Jong and defender Aly Borromeo have been approached by representatives of clubs in the Indonesian Super League with offers to play here.

The 23-year-old Younghusband, a former Chelsea youth team player who was devoted to the current team in 2008 and started their second stint from clubs in Singapore and Vietnam.

More AFF Suzuki Cup stories on A19

Before leaving the hotel here, Younghusband received a letter of interest from a football club in Jakarta.

Laid-back striker

Despite taking a long leave from competitive football, Younghusband dazzled as a laid-back striker in the tournament, scoring one of the two goals that stunned Vietnam, 2-0, in Hanoi.

The Filipino-British striker also scored twice in the qualifying tournament in Vientiane, Laos. He has scored 12 goals in 16 appearances for the country.

A defensive midfielder, the 30-year-old De Jong is still under contract with Sriwijaya, a Dutch second division side.

The 6-foot-1 Borromeo is one of the members of a united Philippine backline that gave up just three goals in five matches.

The Filipino skipper plays for Global Cebu currently in the United Football League back home.

Meanwhile, goalkeeper Neil Etheridge is expected to emerge the pecking order at English Premier League side Fulham in January when three-time keeper Brad Johnson is said to leave from the club by joins his teammates in the Asian Cup in Doha, Qatar.

"I'm really hoping I can start," said the 20-year-old Etheridge.

From the #1 in Postpaid

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Globe

NOKIA

SHUTTLER Makiese Alcala (right) shows her gold medal after riding her division.

Alcala goes all the way in Singapore

THE LAST Filipino standing ended on top: Makiese Ann Alcala claimed honors for winning Manila, 21-15, 21-18, to bag the girls' under-17 crown in the Singapore Youth International Badminton Championships 2010 in Singapore.

The 15-year-old Alcala held off the ailing Ling in the second set to wrap up the match in 37 minutes last Sunday at the Yio Chu Kang Sports Hall.

"It was tough but I really gave my best to win," said Alcala. "This only proves that we can be in par with the best."

Alcala ended the finals after downing Indonesia's Febbie Adinta Pangaset, 21-15, 21-12, in the semifinals, over in the other Filipino bid fell by the wayside.

"This win is also a big boost for Philippine badminton," said Alcala, who tabbed as favorite in next week's Ming Ranoa-Vince National Open, South and Corporate Badminton Championships.

Jopet Encarta settled for a bronze after bowing to Singapore's Chan Huang, 21-17, 21-19, in the under-19 semifinals.

Encarta and Peter Magpayo also fell in the boys' doubles, bowing to Indonesia's Ardiansyah Goh and Ahmad Jabar, 21-13, 20-22, 21-21. —Jasmine B. Payo

Aplus METRO

Makati judge, wife die in road accident

By Julie M. Aurelio

A RETIRED Makati City Regional Trial Court judge and his wife, who were on their way to hear Midnight Mass at a Quezon City church, died before dawn yesterday after a speeding bus crashed into their Pajero as they were entering Commonwealth Avenue.

Police identified the casualties as Reynaldo Lolgo, 79, and his wife Lilia, 66.

Generoso Hugnatan, 62, driver of the Cariaba Express bus involuntarily surrendered to traffic investigators at the Quezon City

DENR official charged with falsifying documents

By Jayson T. Gatdula

ASSISTANT, of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is facing a charge of falsification of documents filed against him yesterday in the Manila Regional Trial Court.

The Office of the Ombudsman had accused DENR-National Capital Region Special Land Investigator I Roland G. Maloto, for making "false statements in a resolution of [his] in his investigation Report."

Maloto, who had surveyed a piece of property in Sipacong Boracay, Boljoo, Tagaig City, claimed in his report that it was a residential lot, and placed the survey plan under the name of a certain Elvira Jose Pedro.

The property is being occupied by heirs and caretakers of Pedro Orol, who had the land surveyed for titling in November 6, 2006.

The Ombudsman found that the San Pedros and Orols have an ongoing dispute over the property, with a pending case in the DENR.

It was found that Jose Pedro told Maloto to survey the property under her name days after the Orols separately requested a Survey Authority from the Land Management Services (DENR-LMS-DENR).

Maloto had conducted a 17-day inspection and released his report on November 10, 2006, finding the LMS-DENR to issue the survey report in San Pedro's name.

The Orols questioned the report, complaining Maloto never even appeared in the property in question. Two other land inspectors had attended to their request for a survey.

The Orols have accused San Pedro and Maloto of "connivning with one another to deliberately give unwarranted benefits, advantage and preference" to San Pedro.

Maloto, however, claimed his alleged inclusion of the lot as residential instead of agricultural and his identification of San Pedro as an occupant, were merely clerical errors.

The Ombudsman has closed

Police investigators looking into gang war angle in Malabon City explosion

By Kristine Felicia Mangunay

THE EXPLOSION that ripped through a Malabon City street near the house of ex-Barangay Longos councilor and suspected drug lord Jun Lozada last Sunday, police investigators are looking into the possibility that the blast was a gang war attack.

Senior Supt. Corneles Buenaventura, Malabon chief of police, said they even if the blast in Barangay Longos occurred a few meters away from the ex-councilor's residence, the fact that the explosion occurred in front of a property owned by Lozada's brother-in-law Jerry Sebastian made it difficult to rule out the possibility that the blast was meant to target Lozada.

"We believe that the explosion was meant to scare away anyone who would want to testify against Lozada," Buenaventura said.

Buenaventura said they have been able to interview at least three witnesses so far in connection with the incident.

"We believe that we have enough witnesses to help us in our investigation," he said.

The police suspects are active in local politics. Sebastian, Angelo's father, assumed his post as barangay chair only last month. The activities himself, a working the seat left by his brother Edward, who died before his official proclamation as an ex-councilor.

Although he got the reaction of the police said that family provoked hostility.

Since most of the suspects in

ordered new names, based on testimonies of witnesses, investigators said other angles, such as gang wars or the blast being the work of pranksters, were more believable.

Police have yet to determine what caused the explosion, but Buenaventura said was likely to have been caused by a pillbox.

On Thursday, an early morning explosion destroyed residence of Barangay Longos and partially damaged the Orla Cruzes' stainless gate.

Police initially held two persons for questioning, but they were later released the same day for lack of evidence against them.

BREASTFEEDING ADVOCATES

THE RELIGIOUS Archbishop Oscar, Fr. Bjorn, Catholic Bishop' Conference of the Philippines (Episcopal Commission on Inter-Religious Dialogue) and United Philippines recently got together to celebrate the National Day of Prayer and Action for Children in Makati City. The groups organized the event and efforts to promote child survival and the national breastfeeding policy. Archbishop Fr. Luke Phan (right of CBCP Episcopal Commission on Health Care, Vicente Belo, United country representative, and Dr. Lilian Bose of Philippines for Peace, Philippines. (CHRISTIAN VASCO)

Judgmental public

ON TARGET

Ronron Ryan

LET'S PUT the Vizconde innocence case to rest—not by continuing to blame the people who were to jail for the crime they never committed—but by finding the culprits.

The culprits, some of whom have probably paid for their dastardly deed under the Universal Law of Karma or Cause and Effect, should be identified.

Some of the perpetrators of the monstrous that shook the nation in the 1990s could be dead by now but the those still alive should be made to suffer for their guilty crimes.

The same immunity in the prime of their years in prison because they refused to say anything, not to mention.

We refused to accept the kind of silence presented by the accused in their defense.

One day is too long for an innocent man to be jailed, but those who languished for 15 years in prison for a crime they never committed.

Even now many of us still believe that Hubert Webb, Antonio Lejano, Michael Gatchalian, Hospicio Sanmiguel, Miguel Rodriguez and Peter Estrada are guilty, despite the Supreme Court's acquittal verdict.

Self-confessed drug addict Jessie Alfaro has been laughing all these years at the doomed lovers-lovers and the public she had fooled with his lies.

Did you know that except for Lejano, Webb only came to know the innocence of his fellow accused when they were already in court, and that Alfaro did not recognize some of them?

How could she not recognize some of them when, according to him she was chosen to all the accused?

Did you know that Judge Amelita Tolentino ignored the star-lineup Alfaro got from an agent of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) to point to Lejano, whom she didn't recognize whether was right in front of her?

Did you know that Alfaro filed seven statements on how Lejano witnessed the massacre, each one contradicting the other?

Did you know that Tolentino didn't have any experience in handling court cases, being a minor assistant to the Allied Bank before she was appointed judge?

I have never accepted a broken arm or City traffic as the inconveniences of Hubert Webb et al.

But the truth about the Vizconde massacre should be separated once and even to get into the convenience of the judgment public.

The Supreme Court ruled recently that Hilary Arroyo can continue to sit in the House of Representatives to represent the party-list group Bantay Patay.

The high court then should now rule on the petition of former Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes of the party-list PAYTAL.

Arroyo and Reyes are in the same boat. The Commission on Elections, however allowed Arroyo to sit in Congress but disallowed Reyes.

Isn't there an "equal protection" clause in the Constitution?

Rep. Rodolfo Magsaysay of the party-list Association of Voluntary Educators reportedly installed Imelda Pomin-Ocampo, a Philippine Airlines (PAL) employee, by calling her "a management bitch" some years.

The management bitch recently upset her scope he and his sons could not be seated together in the business class section of the PAL flight to Los Angeles recently.

Ocampo, who is assigned at the Iloilo check-in counter, told the does not have the power to make seat changes.

The congressman's father is the late senator Gerardo Magsaysay and his mother is Ricky Rodriguez, daughter of former Senate President Eulogio Rodriguez.

If the allegations are true, he has brought shame to his illustrious parents.

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Makati judge, wife die in...

From page A1

Police Senior Chief Inspector Rommel Bautista Santos Station 5 in Barangay Bangkal.

"They were coming from Don Jose Heights where they lived, and were approaching Commonwealth Avenue to get to the northbound lane bound for Fairview on their way to Good Shepherd Cathedral [when] when the accident happened," said Chief Inspector Edgardo Tolentino, case investigator.

The bus was bound for Pulilan, and was allegedly speeding on the northbound lane when it slammed into the driver's side of the Jaguar.

The judge from the impact of the impact, pinning him to the wheel, but his wife was not spared from injuries.

"Because of the impact, the Pajero spun around and was dragged for 10 meters until the bus stopped halfway in the divisor for the brakes," Tolentino said.

Recovery from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) at the scene said were able to immediately extricate Lilia from the wreck, but husband was pulled out much later as recovery had difficulty removing him.

Lilia was rushed to the East Avenue Medical Center while a separate ambulance brought Lugo to the Fairview General Hospital, Hospital, but he died on arrival.

The bus driver was arrested by

Riot police attack opposition after disputed Belarus election

MINSK, Belarus—Antigovernment protesters were beaten back by truncheon-wielding riot police on Sunday when they tried to storm the Belarus government headquarters here in an outburst of anger and frustration over the apparent and, many said, wholly unsurprising re-election of the country's authoritarian president, Alexander Lukashenko.

Thousands of people converged on Independence Square here in the capital, heeding the call of opposition leaders who called Sunday's election a farce and accused Lukashenko of keeping the post-Soviet country locked in dictatorship.

Official election results released by the government early Monday morning showed Lukashenko with 79.7 percent of the vote cast. Reuters reported.

The protesters chanted slogans like "Long Live Belarus" and disparaged Lukashenko, who is 15 years as president has mounted the most stealthy, effective political opponent's and embroiled the secret police, still known here on the KGB. As one police protester charged in the outcome of the interwing government headquarters, breaking through glass doors and trying to push through barricades that had been erected inside, apparently to keep the demonstrators out.

TENS of thousands of opponents of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko rally in the center of Minsk after disputed elections on Dec. 19. AP

But armored riot troops quickly overwhelmed the protesters, at times hounding them toward packs of plainclothes toughs who beat them. Several people stumbled or were carried away covered in blood. Earlier in the evening, four of the leading opposition candidates, Vladimir Neklyaev, appeared to have been beaten unconscious in a separate attack. He was taken to a hospital, but one of his aides said seven men wrapped him in a blanket and carried him away in his unconscious state. Reuters reported.

The protests echoed similar demonstrations in 2006 after an earlier re-election of Lukashenko. Those protests were easily quashed.

By late Sunday evening, police officers watching streets and clubs occupied large swaths of downtown Minsk, and government had begun to disperse. It was unclear how many arrests had been made, though there were reports that several opposition leaders had been detained.

Earlier in the day, Lukashenko suggested that the authorities would take steps to ensure that the opposition would not be able to gather to protest the results, invoking a regulation after casting his vote at a large athletic complex, he called members of the opposition "fascists and subversives."

New York Times News Service

Plan details integration of gays in US military

WASHINGTON—You are a commander of a ship, and some of your top performing officers, who is known to be a lesbian, is at war with her roommate to the point that it is disrupting the entire unit. The officer asks you for some boarding. What do you do?

You are the senior officer at a Navy military recruiting station, and your best recruiter has just told you that his religious beliefs prevent him from processing an outstanding applicant who volunteered that he is gay. What do you do?

These scenarios and their solutions—the commander may consider roommates, and the recruiter could face disciplinary action—are outlined in a detailed and at times explicit 67-page Defense Department plan for carrying out the repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" rule.

In the wake of the Senate vote to end the 17-year-old policy, which barred gay men and women in the military to keep their sexual orientation secret or face discharge, military officials said they did not yet have a timetable for putting the change into effect. President Barack Obama is expected to sign the bill early this week.

"There will certainly be pressure to get it done to 2011," one military official said, referring to the year after the repeal will be a relatively slow but not exact-ing process.

Hearing in the report by service heads, with some parts of the military offered before others, was "highly unlikely," said the official, who asked for anonymity to talk more freely about internal deliberations at the Pentagon.

Under the terms of the legislation that passed the Senate on Saturday and the House on Tuesday, the Defense Department will not carry out the repeal until Defense Secretary Robert Gates, Obama and Adm. Mike Mullen, the chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "certify" that the military is ready to take on the change. After that, the legislation requires a 60-day period before the change takes place.

Gay rights advocates said Sunday that repeal should be carried out as quickly as possible, particularly in the first quarter of next year.

Gates has acknowledged that the president will be watching closely "to ensure that we don't derail in or try to slow-walk this" and that Obama expects the military to prepare "as quickly as we properly and comprehensively could."

To that end, the military's plan for the repeal—little unclassified when it was released at the end of last week but months in the submitted nine-month, 10-page study on the effect of ending "don't ask, don't tell"—demands education and training for commanders as well as combat units, but notes that training "should be efficient and should not burden the force."

The plan also calls for new Defense Department guidelines to prohibit separate barracks and housing assignments on the basis of sexual orientation, although it recommends that commanders be allowed the discretion to make changes. In the case of bathroom and clothing facilities, the plan says that "commanders have the authority to accommodate privacy requests on an individual, case-by-case basis," but it does not specify how privacy requests might be carried out.

In a break, lengthy section at the end of the plan, various hypothetical problems and solutions are posed, including those that the military should do about two lesbian male service members in endless clothes seen kissing and hugging at a shopping mall, or how to handle reports that another service member has been seen "hanging around" a gay bar.

New York Times News Service

North Sudan will be Islamic, leader says

JUBA, Sudan—President Omar Hassan al-Bashir promised Sunday to carry Sudan into an Islamic state governed by Islamic law if the south chooses to secede in a referendum next month.

"We'll change the Constitution," he declared in televised speech. "Shariah and Islam will be the main source for the Constitution. Islam the official religion and Arabic the official language."

The statements were some of al-Bashir's strongest words to date seeming to acknowledge the likelihood of an independent southern Sudanese state and outlining his visions for the remaining northern half, which would stay under his control.

While northern Sudan is already largely governed by Islamic law, its constitution adopted as part of a 2005 peace agreement recognized the country's ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity. That agreement ended generations of civil war between the predominantly Arab and Muslim north and the mainly Christian and animist south.

The interim constitution expires next year, and with it the constitutional obligations of the peace agreement.

"If South Sudan secedes, we will change the Constitution, and at that time there will be no time to speak of diversity of culture and ethnicity," Al-Bashir said.

Southerners are expected to overwhelmingly support secession in the vote, which begins on Jan. 9.

The government has sought to keep the country united, but in recent days senior officials have seemed resigned to the inevitability of a split. "We must not deceive ourselves or cling to dreams," Staff Afi Kodi, a senior member of the governing party, told last week.

Those strong words were not out of keeping for Al-Bashir, who faces international arrest warrants and has been indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and genocide in Darfur, in Sudan's west.

But some analysts feared his statements presaged a brutal crackdown in Sudan's north.

"Bashir is playing a game of chicken with the international community, and he's not going to back down," said Alex de Waal, director of the World Peace Foundation at Tufts University in Massachusetts. "He's going to do what he wants to do, and he's going to say what he wants to say, and he's going to see what the international community does in response."

New York Times News Service

AL-BASHIR AP

A FIREFIGHTER carries a puppy after an oil pipeline explosion in the town of San Martin Texmelucan, Mexico, on Dec. 19. AP

Pipeline blast devastates Mexico city; 28 die

SAN MARTIN TEXMELUCAN, Mexico—A massive oil pipeline explosion lay waste to parts of a central Mexican city Sunday, incinerating people, cars, houses and trees as gushing crude turned streets into flowing rivers. At least 28 people were killed, 13 of them children, in a disaster authorities blamed on clandestine.

The blast in San Martin Texmelucan, initially estimated to have affected 5,000 residents in a low-lying, flood-prone area, reached houses and cars and left burned and paramedics were out and in some cases burned to ash in the intense heat.

Relatives rubbed as firefighters pulled charred bodies from the incinerated houses, some of the remains barely more than piles of ashes and bones.

Officials identified all but four of the dead by Sunday night. Although they released some names, they didn't say if they were all residents of the area's possible suspects.

Hernando Zorla Perez Castro, 27, said the explosion about 5:30 a.m. was strange, weapon-like smell, like gasoline. Minutes later, her chest burned like it was flowing to run and then escaped in flames. Her husband knocked down a wall allowing them to escape out the back of their two-story, cement-brick home with their three children.

Her brother-in-law, in losing treated for burns in a hospital, but she didn't know the fate of his wife and two children.

"It was like we were living in an inferno," she said, her eyes red from crying. "Everything was covered in smoke."

Laura Gurza, chief of the federal Civil Protection emergency management agency, said that all of the 28 dumbs, at least 12 people were hurt and 84 remained in a shelter late Sunday after fleeing San Martin, about 99 kilometers east of Mexico City. More than 115 houses were destroyed, 52 of them destroyed.

The explosion was apparently caused by thieves trying to steal crude oil, said Yolanda Monroy, interior secretary for the state of Puebla, where San Martin is located. Investigators found a hole in the pipeline and equipment for extracting crude, Gurza said.

"They lost control because of the high pressure with which the fuel exits the pipeline," he said.

The oil flowed more than one kilometer down a city street before entering into a river. At the river's mouth of ambulances, origin caused both to erupt in flames.

Several bodies were found in cars near the location of the leak, but authorities didn't know if the dead were involved in the theft or just there by coincidence.

President Felipe Calderon said the federal government would give its full cooperation in investigating who was responsible and bringing them to justice. AP

Australia swaps summer for a white Christmas

SYDNEY—Snow fell in Australia on Monday as the usual hot and summery December weather was replaced in parts by icy gusts sweeping up from the Southern Ocean, giving the country a taste of a white Christmas.

Snow has fallen in parts of east coast states New South Wales and Victoria, leaving ski resorts—many of which are usually snow-free at this time of year—with dumps of up to 14 centimeters.

"It's white, everything is white," Michelle Locke, the general manager of the Snowbirds Outer Hotel at Charlotte Pass said.

"First thing this morning everything was just very still, very peaceful and every single thing was just blanketed in a thick cover of white."

Locke said such an amount of snow was unusual so early December, normally the peak of the wildflower season in the New South Wales mountain region.

"We're hoping that if the cold stays in for the time and we get a white Christmas," she said.

The cold blasts carried through to Sydney where the temperature fell to 12 degrees Celsius early Monday, and dipped to 9.6 Celsius in the city's west where winds of up to 100 kilometers an hour are forecast for much of the state's coastline. AFP

Multibillion telecom scandal dogs India PM

NEW DELHI—India's premier Manmohan Singh on Monday said he had "nothing to hide" as he offered to be quizzed by a parliamentary panel over a multibillion-dollar telecom scandal that has shaken his government.

Singh, who enjoys a reputation for honesty amid India's murky political world, has been battling to counter his image against accusations of failing to act over the government's corporate role of mobile telephone licenses in 2008.

"I have nothing to hide from the public or all," Singh declared at a Congress party meeting, adding he would write to the chair of parliament's public accounts committee agreeing to appear before it.

He said being questioned by the committee would silence critics and opposition parties who have demanded a cross-party investigation into the sale of second-generation (2G) licenses.

Singh said his office was instructed to clear the air and ensure that the prime minister won't "shy-er suspicion."

As premier since 2004, "I may have made mistakes" but "I have tried to serve my country," said Singh, 78, an academic who spearheaded India's economic liberalization in the 1990s when he was finance minister.

He has repeatedly refused opposition demands for the ruling party probe into the scandal, which paralyzed parliament for almost a week, and has instead agreed to appear before a parliamentary panel over a multibillion-dollar telecom scandal that has shaken his government

The WORLD

Cito Lorenzo B. Gozo

Seoul holds fire drill despite war threats

YEONPYEONG ISLAND, South Korea—South Korea held a live-fire drill on a border island and scrambled fighter jets on Monday, despite North Korean threats of retaliation, as UN diplomacy on the crisis broke down.

But in an apparent sign of restraint—seen as nuclear ambitions, the North agreed with US troubleshooter Bill Richardson to permit the return of UN aircraft inspectors to examine missiles, CNN reported.

The defense ministry said the drill began around 2:30 p.m. and ended just after 4 p.m. "Our armed forces are now on alert and fighter jets are on defense alert," a military spokesperson said.

Yonhap news agency said two destroyers had also been deployed in the Yellow Sea south of the disputed border.

An emergency UN Security Council meeting failed to agree on a statement on the crisis, and Russia warned that the international community was now left without "a game plan" to counter escalating tensions.

North Korea used a similar exercise by South Korean marines on Nov. 23 to justify a bombardment of Yeonpyeong island that killed four people including civilians and damaged dozens of homes.

It denounced another attack in response to the latest drill that would be "deadlier... in terms of the powerfulness and spheres of the strike."

"The military must take every possible step to cope with possible provocations by North Korea," the South's Defense Ministry Kim Kwan-Jin said after the drill ended.

President Lee Myung-Bak ordered all government officials to "take emergency steps."

The United States, which has some 28 troops on the island backing up Monday's drill, stood by the South's right to self-defense. Japan urged South Korea not to take any "provocative actions" in response.

The North disputes the Yellow Sea border drawn by United Nations forces after the 1950-53 war. It claims the waters around Yeonpyeong, where shells land after firing exercises, as its own.

Its military appeared to be preparing for a counter-attack, removing covers from coastal artillery guns and forward-deploying some batteries, a military source told Yonhap.

CNN correspondent Will Ripley, who is travelling with Richardson in Pyongyang, said there were signs of deal-making in nuclear talks.

North Korea had agreed with Richardson to let inspectors from the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency return to its Yongbyon nuclear complex, Ripley said.

It had also agreed to allow 12,000 nonciean food rods to be shipped to an outside country, and to the creation of a military commission and hotline between the two Koreas and the United States, Ripley said.

The North's disclosure last month of a new uranium enrichment plant sparked fears of a potential new source of bombmaking material.

Richardson, a seasoned negotiator with the North, was due to hold responses in Beijing later Monday.

At the UN, China fended off Western demands that its ally North Korea be publicly condemned for the Nov. 23 artillery attack, diplomats said.

They said it even rejected a proposed statement that did not mention North Korea or the name of Yeonpyeong. AFP

A RESIDENT wears a gas mask in an air raid bunker on Yeonpyeong Island on Dec. 20, as South Korea stages live-firing drills in the disputed area. AP/File

UN powers wrangle over blaming N. Korea for attack

UNITED NATIONS—The UN Security Council on Sunday held emergency talks on escalating Korean tensions but the major powers wrangled over whether to condemn North Korea for the crisis.

Russia had called for the council to send a "restraining signal" to the two Koreas...amid the South vowing to stage a new live-fire military drill and the North threatening retaliation.

After more than six hours of talks, however, the five permanent powers—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States—remained split on whether the communist North should be publicly blamed for causing the heightened tensions with its Nov. 23 artillery attack on Yeonpyeong island.

China and Russia, North Korea's near neighbors and main allies, opposed western demands that the North be named in the attacks' diplomats said.

China even refused to let the name Yeonpyeong be included in a proposed Council statement...the diplomat said.

Russia and China instead proposed a text which urged "maximum restraint" on the Korean peninsula and called on UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to send a special envoy to negotiate "urgent measures" with the two governments.

Britain, backed by France, the United States and Japan, had proposed a text which "deplored" North Korea's artillery attack.

This was rejected by China and Russia which then proposed an implicit condemnation of the Pyongyang regime by referring to a statement by the UN secretary general which called the Yeonpyeong attack "one of the gravest incidents since the end of the Korean War."

The 15 Security Council members issued a briefing on the latest Korean crisis from B. Lynn Pascoe, UN undersecretary general for political affairs, and also had private talks with Ban and UN envoys from North and South Korea.

Russia's original draft statement called for "maximum restraint" by North and South Korea, diplomats said.

The Russian document sought the "resumption of dialogue and resolution of all problems dividing them exclusively through peaceful diplomatic means," diplomats said. AFP

Palestinian leader hosts meeting with Israelis

RAMALLAH, West Bank—The Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, hosted a two-hour meeting with about 60 Israeli politicians, public figures and activists on the Palestinian side Tuesday in an effort to reach out to the Israeli public at a time when the official peace process is at a standstill.

"In the end, we want to make peace between the people, the Israeli and Palestinian people," not just the governments, Abbas said.

The unusual gathering originated with an invitation from the Palestinian side and was organized by the Geneva Initiative, a group of Israeli and Palestinian figures who negotiated an unofficial blueprint for a permanent peace accord in 2003.

Amram Mitzna, a former leader of the Israeli left-of-center Labor Party, who led the Israeli delegation to the meeting here in Ramallah, said while Israelis and Palestinians seemed to have moved closer in their positions in the past few years, they also seemed farther than ever from reaching an agreement.

Most of the Israelis attending the meeting were from the so-called Israeli peace camp, but there were also members of Parliament from the center-left opposition and from the conservative-leaning Likud Party; a former member of Parliament from Shas, the ultra-Orthodox Sephardic party; and some representatives of ultra-Orthodox communities.

Abbas was joined by his top negotiators and advisers, as well as many well-known Palestinian academics, civic organizers, representatives, political leaders and activists.

For veterans of the peace process, it was an opportunity to connect with old friends. Some of the Israelis, however, were visiting Ramallah for the first time ever.

Long tables were laid out in the main hall of the Muqata, the presidential compound, and a traditional lunch of lamb and rice was served. Special, extra-leather stools in sealed containers were provided for the Orthodox Jewish delegation.

Peace for the evening began a few months ago, but organizers said it took no additional urgency when the peace process stalled.

The Palestinians requested negotiations with the current Israeli government on the eve of Yom Kippur after Israel's 51-month moratorium on construction in West Bank Jewish settlements expired. Earlier this month, the United States dropped its efforts to persuade Israel to agree to an additional 90-day moratorium.

The Palestinians are refusing to return to talks without a freeze there, limiting the peace process deadlocked.

Abbas said Sunday that there would be no talks, direct or indirect, so long as settlement construction continued, a position he described as "a red line."

But the overall point of Sunday's daylong meeting seemed to be less of recriminations and more of the possibility of peace based on a two-state solution, which would see the establishment of an independent Palestine alongside Israel.

Abbas's political leadership had ruled out violence and was committed to resolving the conflict through peace talks. New York Times News Service

PHOC EXPLORATION CORPORATION
Building 7, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Telephone Nos. (632) 840-2000 to 2010
Telefax Nos. (632) 840-2011 • Fax Nos. (632) 815-1

INVITATION TO BID

PHOC Exploration Corporation (PHOC EC) through its Bid and Awards Committee is inviting qualified parties to participate in the bidding for the Contract for Petroleum Exploration Rights over Area Block-__ (the "Block"). The contract is subject to the PEC shall be substantially executed in the Contract.

Interested companies must submit their bids to the Bid and Awards Committee at the above address, on or before 10:00 a.m. (Philippine time) on the 30th day from the date of publication and receipt of bids, a contract under a Bid Report.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a pre-determined "qualified" criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act". Bidding is conducted in Filipino, international procedures, organizations with a registered office and conducting business in the Philippines, by offering a complete set of equipment, facilities or organizations or to provide the same, in accordance with good governance principles in Philippines, pursuant to RA 9184 and related Commonwealth Act 138.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from PHOC EC's Procurement Section on May 15, 2013 at the PHOC EC Head Office, Bldg. 7, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, and may purchase the bid documents for the consideration specified in the following documents.

Bidders shall submit their bid documents in accordance with Section 27.1 of the IRR of RA 9184, on or before January 15, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. (Philippine time). Late bids shall not be accepted.

PHOC EC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For clarification or data related to our website, or www.phoc-ec.com.ph, and to the PHOC's website (www.philippine.com).

(Signed)
Bids and Awards Committee

ADV. December 11, 2012

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
LBP Bldg., No. 319 Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue, Makati City, 1200
Tel. Nos. 818-5555 • 405-7000 • www.landbank.com

INVITATION TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines (LANDBANK), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites qualified contractors/consultants to participate in the bidding of the following projects:

Description	Approved Budget for the Contract	Non-Refundable Fee	Delivery Period
[illegible]	Php [illegible]	Php 5,000.00	Forty five (45) calendar days after receipt of Purchase Order
[illegible]	Php 2,100,000.00	Php 1,000.00	Three (3) years after receipt of Purchase Order

Prospective bidders should have completed, within the last five (5) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The duly accredited bidders may obtain and purchase the bidding documents from the BAC upon presentation of Identification (ID) cards. Bids submitted to the BAC shall be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the place address, date and time specified below.

PHOC EC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For clarification or data related to our website, or www.phoc-ec.com.ph and to the PHOC's website (www.philippine.com).

(Signed)
Bids and Awards Committee

ADV. December 11, 2012

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	December 11, 2012 to January 07, 2013
2. Pre-bid Conference	January 7, 2013 09:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. 10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Procurement Department, 20th Floor LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. Del Pilar cor. Dr. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
3. Opening of Bids	January 21, 2013 - 10:00 a.m.
4. Bid Evaluation	January 22 - 25, 2013
5. Post-qualification	January 28 - 31, 2013
6. Notice of Award	February 1, 2013

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of the applicable non-refundable amount to the LBP Cashier.

The LANDBANK reserves its rights to prospective bidders and to reject any or all bids, and to waive any defect therein, without incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

Member: Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation - Maximum Deposit Insurance for Each Depositor PHP500,000.00

A lot of zeros in Wall Street Christmas pay

BONUS season is fast approaching on Wall Street, but this year the talk does not center just on multimillion-dollar paydays. It's about a new club that no one wants to join: the Zeros.

Drawn from a broad swath of back-office employees and middle-level traders, bankers and brokers, the Zeros, so they have come to be called, are facing a new financial pinch: an annual bonus of ... nothing.

"It's going to create a lot of pain on Wall Street," said Richard Bova, president of Global Sage, an executive search firm. "Everybody is talking about it, but they're actually resigned to it becoming public. So, I would not want to be head of compensation at a Wall Street firm right now."

In some ways, a zero bonus should not come as a surprise to many bankers. As a result of the 2008 financial crisis, Wall Street firms like Goldman Sachs and Bank of America have reduced their payrolls substantially. In 2009 and 2010, they were working to placate regulators who had argued that big bonuses based on performance encouraged excessive risk-taking.

At Goldman, for instance, the base salary for managing directors rose to $600,000 from $300,000, while at Morgan Stanley and Credit Suisse it jumped to $400,000 from $200,000.

"Base salaries have moved up, so there is less money over all to the bonus pool this year," said Glenn Schorr, an analyst at Nomura, the Japanese bank. "So to make the math possible, some people will be getting small or no bonus this year."

Even though employees will receive roughly the same amount of money, the psychological blow of not getting a bonus is substantial, especially in a Wall Street culture that has long equated success and self-worth with pay.

So there are sure to be plenty of long faces on employees across the financial sector who have come to expect a bonus on top of their base pay. Wall Streeters typically find out when their bonuses will be in January, with the payers coming in February.

One exception, when firm paychecks threatening the topic with the news media, and the bump in base salaries had confused people, even though their overall compensation was the same. "People expect a big bonus," this person said. "It is as if they don't even see their base checks that they get every."

Trading with the Zeros can be complicated. "It's a real headache," said a senior banker, who asked not to be identified because the topic is so volatile at his company. Those has been so much grousing that in some cases, he said, "we'll throw $20,000 or $25,000 at each of the Zeros so they're not discouraged."

"The matter what we pay people, it is never enough and they always find something to complain about," this banker said.

While Zeros are turning up in the ranks of back-office employees and rubber bankers and traders who typically earn $250,000 to $500,000, they loom large on the compensation ladder are still expected to earn hundreds of thousands of dollars.

In terms of overall profit, Wall Street is on track for one of its best years ever, although it will trail 2009, which was pumped up by huge trading profits that will not be found from the financial crisis.

In the first three quarters of the year, Wall Street earned $21.4 billion, putting it on track to easily surpass 2008, when the economy was booming, and well ahead of the New York City government's initial estimate of $14.5 billion in profit for 2012.

This year, Wall Street's five biggest firms have put aside nearly $90 billion for bonuses.

But bankers and compensation experts say bonus payouts will vary widely this year, much more than in the past when a rising tide lifted all boats.

"I suspect there will be some pain in the short-term," said Robert Hurst, president of the Regional Flat Association, an independent research group in Manhattan.

"We've all heard the stories of someone showing up in Greenwich to buy a $15 million house and paying cash on the spot," he added. "But in the long run, this is probably healthier for Wall Street and the regional economy. Wall Street shouldn't be a casino." New York Times News Service

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Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano
BUSINESS

Computer

11-month BOP surplus swells to $13B

Record monthly high in November at $3.9B

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE BALANCE of payments registered a record-high monthly surplus of $3.9 billion in November as the country continued to receive bigger foreign portfolio investments, remittances and inflows in the business process outsourcing sector.

Documents from the central bank showed that the BOP surplus for the month was a stark reversal of the $99-million deficit registered in the same month in 2009, when the global economic turmoil [illegible]

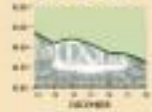
(CONTINUED)

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Meralco to issue P5B** in fixed-rate notes /B4
■ **BSP seen tightening** monetary policy earlier than expected /B3

INDICATORS

PESO-DOLLAR RATE
Dec. 30, 2013
44.380



STOCK MARKET
Dec. 30, 2013
19.73

(Detailed market report on Page B2)

Bargain-hunting lifts stocks

LOCAL STOCKS yesterday bounced up as domestic investors hunted for bargains after last week's profit-taking worsened valuations to more attractive levels.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index added 19.73 points or about 0.48 percent to 4,057.08. This was despite the geopolitical tensions in the Korean peninsula sparking markets in neighboring countries.

The day's recovery was led by the services and mining-oil counters, which rallied 1.7 and 1.3 percent, respectively. Only the holding firm counters traded in the red.

There were 93 advancers that overwhelmed 63 decliners while 45 stocks were unchanged. Value turnover was still weak at P4.25 billion.

While many fund managers have anticipated a year since the mid-September rally, some have started to pick up stocks that have fallen to attractive levels.

Economic incentives fueled the last-gain-hunting that cooked up the stock, marked as foreign investors were still in a net selling position by P68 million for the day.

Boris C. Jimenez

BSP bans pre-approved credit cards

BANKS WILL no longer be allowed to distribute pre-approved credit cards, a practice that has elicited fraud-related complaints from the public.

Responding to such complaints, the Monetary Board (MB) has moved to guide those fighting credit card regulation in the country. The guidelines, which will take effect 15 days after publication, prohibit banks from issuing pre-approved credit cards to potential clients.

Pre-approved credit cards—those that are issued without application by the intended recipients—are usually sent to target clients through regular mail or courier service. The instrument's recipient uses the card for a purchase or cash advance automatically makes him or her a credit card customer liable to pay the applicable interest rate and service fees.

The problem with pre-approved credit cards, the BSP said, was that there were the supposed recipients prone to becoming victims of fraud. Some intended recipients do not get to hold the credit cards and the cards intended for them are fraudulently used by other people.

"The MB [Monetary Board of the BSP] gave particular weight to concerns that pre-approved cards have exposed the public in cases of fraud via unsolicited use of said cards," the BSP said in a statement.

The new credit card guidelines likewise require banks to notify a cardholder that his account would be endorsed to a collection agency at least seven days before the actual endorsement is made. Collection agencies are tapped to collect overdue accounts.

"The notification requirement is expected to also give cardholders enough time to consider whether it will be advantageous for them to settle before their accounts are endorsed to collection agents," the BSP said.

Under the guidelines, cardholders should be notified about the identity of the [illegible]

Megaworld to spend ₱60B on property projects in 2011

Tan: We have never been this bullish on real estate sector

By Doris C. Dumlao

TYCOON ANDREW TAN-led property group Megaworld plans to roll out a record-high 18,075 residential units worth P60 billion next year to harness growth from the strong property market.

This will make available for sale to the market new homes with a total floor area of more than 850,000 square meters in 2011 across the 28 townships launched by the group, the company announced yesterday.

"We have never been this bullish on the property sector and we look forward to continued bright prospects not only in 2011, but long after that," said Tan, who is Megaworld Corp. chairman and chief executive officer.

The Megaworld group comprises listed mid-to-high-end property developer Megaworld Corp. and its associates Empire East Land Holdings and Suntrust Properties, which focus on mid-income and affordable housing, respectively.

Megaworld will take the lion's share of projects to be launched next year with a residential pipeline of 15,000 units, consisting of 12,129 units with an aggregate floor area exceeding 672,000 sq. m.

Empire East and Suntrust Properties plan to unveil their own residential projects worth P39 billion in Metro Manila and the luxury gaming center of Cavite and Laguna next year, the developers said. The new projects will have a total of 5,896 residential units with an aggregate floor area of more than 466,000 sq.m.

The "massive homebuilding program" for 2011 is seen as the most number of units that the group will launch in any single year.

The confidence level in the real estate sector is very high," said Tan. "Many economists here and abroad believe that our country is now moving in the right direction, and we are a range of investments, especially in infrastructure areas, which will open up more growth opportunities not only for the entire economy but also for the real estate industry."

Megaworld's new residential projects include One Eastwood Ave. in Eastwood City, El Beso in Bifid, and 101 Newport Blvd. in Newport City, Venera Residences and Eco Arte Avenue of The Venice in McKinley Hill; additional towers in Mandaluyong Heights and Shaw Park at Monterrey Garden City; Paseo Heights in Mactan City; The Palm Bay in Aseas Boulevard, and One Uptown Place at Bonifacio Uptown in Taguig City.

The company also expects to complete more than 600,000 sq.m. of "town-center" office space for its business district surrounding Suntrust and additional retail space at its ongoing McKinley Hill, Newport City and CityPlace projects as well as the upcoming Bonifacio Uptown and other projects in Iloilo and Cebu. This is now targeted by the company given the rental income to P5 billion by 2012.

Megaworld is the developer of five live work-play communities in Metro Manila—Eastwood City, McKinley Hill, Fort Bonifacio, and the upcoming Bonifacio Uptown in Fort Bonifacio, and Newport City in Pasay City. When completed, the five mega-communities will be home to around 40,000 families and 20,000-600 office workers.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Social Welfare and Development
DSWD Social Welfare and Development Bureau
Commission Hills, Quezon City 1126
Telephone Nos. (632) 931-8101 to 07
Telefax: (632) 931-8191
e-mail: sdb@dswd.gov.ph
Website: http://www.dswd.gov.ph

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Republic of the Philippines

Social Welfare and Development Reform Project (SWDRP)
Loan Number 7606-PH

"Enhancement of the NHTS-PR Information System and Supporting ICT Infrastructure Project"
DSS Number: DSWD/12-COMP-001

1. This Invitation for Bids (IFB) follows the General Procurement Notice (GPN) for this project that appeared in UNDB online and dgMarket on [date].
2. The Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development toward the Social Welfare and Development Reform Project (SWDRP), and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of the loan to payments under the agreement resulting from this IFB. "Enhancement of the NHTS-PR Information System and Supporting ICT Infrastructure Project" with DSS Number: DSWD/12-COMP-001.
3. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) welcomes the implementing agency for Proposed and now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply of the project which includes the following:
   i. Supply, install and configure related ICT hardware, software and communications to operate a secure and reliable data center for NHTS-PR;
      a. ICT hardware, software and services for Core Systems Development
      b. ICT hardware, software and services for Security and Disaster Recovery
      c. ICT Hardware, software and services for Collaboration and Integrated Communications Systems
   ii. Supply, install and configure sealed ICT hardware, software and services needed to CONVERT, manage and extract data and information as the NHTS-PR;
      a. ICT hardware, software for high Availability Database
      b. Database Configuration and Migration Services
   iii. Supply, install and configure ICT hardware, software and services needed to generate, report, analyze and share relative data and information as the NHTS-PR;
      a. ICT hardware, software and services for integrated PMT solution
      b. ICT hardware, software and services for Geographic Information Systems
4. Bidding will be conducted using the International Competitive Bidding (ICB) procedures specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits, edition of May, 2004 and revised in October 2006, and is open to all bidders eligible as defined in those Guidelines. Bid must be delivered within the qualification criteria:
   - Acquisition of ICT project components must be part of a project management, operations, development, and acquisition of integrated hardware, software and technical support will be submitted from systems integrated with the following characteristics:
   - Financial capability: Prospective bids is authorized to supply the equipment and provide warranty on behalf of the respective OEM's. Certificates to that effect must be submitted along with the bid bid.
   - Bidder's experience: The bidder must have successfully completed at least two (2) similar contracts, each with a value of at least [equivalent to] Php 10 million, within the last five (5) years ending the previous year, and should have the capability and experience to undertake the proposed contract. In cases with this proposition/contract period, at least [illegible].
   - The bidder should have completed, at least two (2) projects similar to within the last five (5) years involving the previous and satisfactory contract in hands with this proposition/contract period, at least [illegible].
   - Financial resources: a variety of [illegible] shown either as a) Bank statements, annual earnings for the previous three years as shown in the audited financial statements; or b) line of credit.
5. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the DSWD-BAC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, DSWD Building, IBP Road, Constitution Hills, Quezon City 1126, Philippines, and inspect the bidding documents from Monday to Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php [illegible] at the DSWD Administrative Conference Room, 2nd Floor, DSWD Building, IBP Road, Constitution Hills, Quezon City 1126, Philippines.
6. A pre-bid conference shall be held on [illegible] at the DSWD Administrative Conference Room, 2nd Floor, DSWD Building, IBP Road, Constitution Hills, Quezon City 1126, Philippines, and is open to prospective bidders. For this conference, all bidders should have purchased the bidding documents from the DSWD-BAC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, DSWD Building, IBP Road, Constitution Hills, Quezon City 1126, Philippines, and registered their attendance at the pre-bid conference. Bidders may also download the bidding documents from the PhilGEPS website (https://www.philgeps.net) and http://www.philgeps.net).
7. Bids must be submitted on or before 10:00 AM on [illegible] at the DSWD-BAC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, DSWD Building, IBP Road, Constitution Hills, Quezon City 1126, Philippines or to arrive by the end of [illegible] (Philippine Time). Bids received after the deadline will be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the DSWD Administrative Conference Room, 2nd Floor, DSWD Building, IBP Road, Constitution Hills, Quezon City 1126, Philippines.
8. The attention of prospective bidders is drawn to the fact that they will be required to certify in their bids that all software is either covered by a valid license or was produced by the bidder and all that violations are indemnified from, which can result in ineligibility to be awarded. [illegible] and [illegible] contracts.

THE BAC CHAIRPERSON
DSWD Bids and Awards Committee
c/o BAC Secretariat
2nd Floor, DSWD Building
IBP Road, Constitution Hills
Quezon City, 1126, Philippines
Telephone: (632) 931-7191
Facsimile No. (632) 931-8101 Local 210

(Sgd.) FLORA B. CABRERA
Assistant Secretary and
Bids and Awards Committee Chairperson

By:
(Sgd.) [illegible]
Bids and Awards Committee Vice Chairperson

[illegible] December 17, 2010

PetroEnergy gets tax perks

By Jerry R. Rosco

PHILEX LISTED PetroEnergy Resources Corp. yesterday said it was granted last week a new renewable energy developer status by the Board of Investments for its proposed 20-megawatt Malampaya geothermal power project in Mt. Makiling.

The income that PetroEnergy will be able to avail from the new incentives is the geothermal project as provided under the Renewable Energy Act of 2008.

Renewable energy producers are entitled to a seven-year income tax holiday, including new investments. After this, companies will be entitled to a 10-percent corporate tax rate.

Power producers are also eligible for a 10-year exemption from import tariff duties on equipment, parts and materials, and operating host community, accelerated depreciation and zero-value-added tax rate.

Other fiscal perks offered such incentives for customers, electricity rates, specific tax, sole ownership of capital equipment and machinery for not to exceed 15 percent of imported cost, for exemption on carbon credits and tax credit on domestic capital equipment and services.

PetroEnergy recently disclosed that Malampaya Geothermal Inc., the vehicle company for undertaking the geothermal project, planned to spend P100 million to finance exploration activities within the prospective site.

BSP bans . . .

Pass page B-

following spree. This addresses concerns over sales activities as reflected by some collecting agents, the BSP said.

Under the rule, fees and penalties imposed against delinquent borrowers, while others may not exceed the actual amount due, for a billing cycle would result in the imposition of interest and other charges.

Regulators said some cardholders were not fully aware of how interest and charges were computed on their purchases, while others were not aware that paying less than the total amount due resulted in the payment of applicable interest and charges.

They said [illegible] would help prevent the public not only against fraud but also against misleading or deceptive practices.

Statements from the BSP showed that outstanding credit card loans amounted to P329.9 billion as of mid-June this year, about 5 percent lower than the P345.6 billion it was last year.

By Bella V. Rosco

Philippine Stock Exchange

As of [illegible], 2010

[illegible]

Currency

[illegible]

NTC seen surpassing income target

By Paolo D. Pinlac

THE NATIONAL Telecommunications Commission (NTC) is on track to beating its 12-month profit goal that will allow it to retain more funds to and help the government raise its its budget shortfall this year.

In a statement, the NTC said it was projecting a P16.6-billion net income this year, up from P2.9 billion last year.

This is also higher than the NTC's income target of P11.1 billion in 2010. The NTC also gets a budget of about P600 million a year but a proposal in Congress seeks to grow the regulator's fund somewhat.

"The NTC continues to pursue its mandate of regulating and supervising the telecommunications, broadcast and other related industries with revenues generated from the collection of fees from franchises, licenses, permits, applications, clearances, certifications, supervision and regulation and spectrum usage," the regulator said in a statement.

In a report to the DOT, the NTC said that as at the end of last month, it had already surpassed by P600 million its 2010 income target of P11 billion, which sets out by the Department of Budget Management (DBM) and the Department of Finance (DOF).

Based on its latest tally, the NTC has already posted P1.016 billion.

"The increase in revenue primarily came from the NTC's concerted efforts to strictly enforce rules [DOTC] compliance is remaining low.

BSP seen tightening monetary policy earlier than expected

Regulator said to be preparing market for adjustments soon

By Doris C. Dumlao

CHINATRUST INVESTMENT bank Credit Agricole CIB sees the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas turning "hawkish" or favoring monetary tightening early next year.

In its weekly daily research roundup, Credit Agricole CIB said its reading of several news coming out of Manila was that the BSP was becoming "relatively hawkish."

While Credit Agricole said it was not expecting any change in the BSP's key rates during the next policy rate-setting of the Monetary Board at the end of the month, the central bank was seen "preparing the market for an earlier than expected rate hike next year."

The Manila-based bank is one of those central banks that downgraded their monetary policy based on long-term outlook targets. Any shift to hawkish stance from the "dovish" position they has been maintained in the last two years is thus presumed to be in response to economic inflationary risks.

In general, the tightening of the monetary policies, it said, had been initiated in view of the global financial turmoil that claimed some venerable Wall Street institutions in 2008, unless a new different condition in terms of timing.

In the same Credit Agricole CIB report written by analyst Francisco Chuang, China was projected to raise its one-year 25-basis-point hike on key policy rates by the end of the year. The European investment bank said this would be "to fight inflationary pressure, especially after the monetary policy stance has already been changed to neutral from 'tight and easy' bias."

The research also stated the People's Bank of China's statement that it was trying to take the stock market overdose into consid-

eration when making policy decisions.

This may explain the reluctance to hike interest rates after inflation in China jumped to a 28-month high of 5.1 percent year-on-year in November, the research said.

Across the region, Credit Agricole CIB said both the data flow and market liquidity would likely be thin over the last couple of weeks of the year.

After a banking crew month of the second half of 2010 it looks as though the US dollar will end the year in strong form having risen by over 6 percent since its early November," the research said.

The peso-greenback weakened further to 44.38 against the US dollar from 44.30 on Friday.

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Philex Mining: A value and growth stock

MY BOLD remarks last week that "maybe it's high time to stalk stocks" produced many reactions that I can reply to.

The said reactions reminded me that investors are indeed basically divided into two classifications: Those who are into value investing and those who are more into growth investing.

My prime stock pick

Value and growth stocks are those whose market prices are considered less or are considered based on their corporate history's business performance affecting earnings, asset, cash flow and volume of sales.

On one hand, value stocks represent companies with low price-earnings multiple and a high degree of asset worth, cash flow and dividend yields.

Growth stocks, on the other hand, are of companies whose business performance display a continuing increase in sales and earnings every year.

In stock market language, growth stocks are of companies that have "high earnings record, relative strength of revenue growth, and low price-earnings ratio." "value" stocks are those whose market prices have "gone low as a result of tough times or just because the market is overall price."

Incidentally, value stock companies are in most cases larger than growth stock companies. But one may realize the investment returns are found equitably divided.

Nonetheless, value and growth stocks are but a continuum to each other like north and south. Therefore, there are stocks that are both value and growth stocks.

Under this category is Philex Mining Corp. (PX), my prime stock pick.

Thanks to Philex Mining representative Atty. Jaime Ferrer Miguel, who was kind enough to "walk me through the push," so to speak, for me to fully appreciate why Philex Mining is both a value and and growth stock.

Company structure

Incorporated in 1955, Philex Mining has an estimated market capitalization equivalent to $4.92 billion. The structure of its business is basically divided into two groups. These are the metals and the energy and oil business operations.

The metals business' interests are represented by the Padcal mine, Philex Gold Philippines Inc. and Silangan Mindanao Mining Co. Inc., while its energy and oil businesses are represented by Philex Energy & Mining Corp., Philex Petroleum Corp., Philex Petroleum Plc and Forum Energy Plc.

The coal business operations are by the very foundation of Philex Mining's

MARKET RIDER

Dave Sonnere

present and future segments financial product (COD) and life.

Myth on the Padcal mine

The Padcal mine started operations in 1968. It was initially estimated to contain 18 million tons of mineral resources containing copper and gold.

Defying all estimates, the Padcal mine has since then churned out about 340 million tons in output and is still producing to this day. This debunks the popular notion that Philex's mining days are numbered because its main driver of revenue and income is about to vanish, said Mr. Miguel.

According to company studies, the Padcal mine need June 30, 2010 has estimated resources and reserves as follow: "mineral resources" equivalent to 153 million tons that will yield an average of 0.34 percent copper and 0.010 percent gold, equivalent to a total of 798 million pounds of copper and 2.2 million ounces of gold.

It has an additional "proven reserves" established to a total of 69 million tons that will have an average yield of 0.32 percent copper and 0.044 percent gold, equivalent to the 264 million pounds of copper and 0.05 million ounces of gold.

Based on the company's current yearly mining capacity of 120,000 ounces of gold and 50-60 million pounds of copper, its current mineral resources and proven reserves will last no less than the year 2017.

This does not discount the fact that the Padcal mine can continue to be a profitable mine owing to its history of production since it started in 1958, Mr. Miguel added.

On-going plans

As of September 2010, Philex Mining started pre-feasibility studies on the Silangan resources in the Boyongan and Surigao prospects. The study conducted to date for said findings are as follow: 107.4 million tons of "measured and indicated" resources in Boyongan and 69.7 million tons of "indicated" as well as 72.7 million tons of "inferred" resources in Surigao.

The studies also show that the Boyongan prospect has an estimated cut-off grade of 0.3 percent copper and the Surigao prospect with the cut-off grade of 0.4 percent copper and gold grade of 0.03 gm/ton. The

11-month BOP surplus . . .

From page B1

lowed to have peaked.

The November figure brought the BOP surplus in the first 11 months to $11.19 billion, the highest ever recorded by the Philippines.

The BSP is the difference between the inflow and outflow of dollars and other foreign currencies. A surplus adds to the country's total foreign exchange holdings...or the gross international reserves (GIR)—an indicator of the country's ability to engage in economic transactions with the rest of the world for such activities as payment for imports and foreign currency-denominated debts.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas earlier reported that the GIR touched the $60-billion mark on November to hit an all-time high of $61.3 billion.

The BSP said the latest GIR was enough to cover 10.7 months' worth of the country's imports. The foreign exchange reserves were at a very comfortable level, the central bank said, as international standards set a comfortable reserves level as being equivalent to at least three months' worth of imports.

Central bank officials said the rise in the dollar inflows was brought by a host of factors, including foreign investments in local stocks and bonds, remittances and investments in the domestic BPO industry.

The inflows of dollars, particularly those in the form of foreign portfolio investments, were attributed to the optimistic view of investors on the economy of the Philippines and those of other countries in Asia.

Other developing Asian countries have also witnessed a steep rise in foreign "hot money" inflows because of profit-seeking investors expected a robust expansion of economies in this part of the world and as interest rates in the United States remained very low.

In the first 11 months, foreign portfolio investments registered a net inflow of $4.2 billion, up more than nine times from only $451 million in the same period last year.

Remittances from overseas Filipino labor likewise grew robustly this year as the recovery of many countries from the global economic crisis led to an increase in their demand for labor.

Money sent by Filipinos abroad reached $15.5 billion in the first 10 months, up 7.3 percent from $14.321 billion in the same period last year.

The BSP has been buying dollars heavily this year to stem the peso's appreciation, which has been a consequence of the huge inflow of dollars. The peso, which certainly favors in the 44-to-a-dollar territory, has gained about 6 percent since the start of the year.

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Meralco to issue P5B in fixed-rate notes

Utility using proceeds for debt refinancing

By Amy R. Roma

MANILA ELECTRIC Co., the country's biggest power distributor, yesterday said it would issue fixed-rate notes to raise P5 billion mainly for debt refinancing.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Meralco said the offering would be issued in two tranches.

The notes, the company added, will be issued today.

Three months ago, Meralco also issued fixed-rate notes and raised P4.6 billion. The proceeds of which were likewise earmarked for debt refinancing.

Then Metro Investment Corp. was tapped as the arranger and bookrunner for the issuance.

The notes, the company added, will be issued today.

Three months ago, Meralco also issued fixed-rate notes and raised P4.6 billion. The proceeds of which were likewise earmarked for debt refinancing.

These were seven- and 10-year notes, which were priced at 5.4127 percent and 6.4936 percent, respectively.

As of end-September this year, Meralco's outstanding debt stood at P200.627 billion.

Bella C. Jin-Yap, Meralco senior vice president and chief finance officer, earlier said the company would tap the local debt market and raise funds before the end of the year to finance net cash Meralco's capital, but also to refinance power projects.

Yap said the last quarter of 2012 was an opportune time to tap the debt market given the low interest rate environment and the liquidity in the banking system. Meralco had since been approached by local banks for possible refinancing and bonding.

The power distributor earlier faced a number of proposed projects that would require installing generators in the Isla de Pasig power plants and electric vehicle breakaway.

Apart from projects to intensively improve its distribution network, Meralco also eyes to build a coal-fired facility that can initially generate 500 megawatts (MW) of electricity. The project is targeted to be made available by 2012 to 2013.

In the long run, Meralco targets to harness natural gas to put up another 1,200 MW in baseload capacity that may also go up to as much as between 2014 and 2016.

The planned additional capacity may be increased depending on the yearly growth in demand, state of existing power plants to be operated

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DOLE-NCR BUILDING, 1007 Philippine St., Makati, Manila

Invitation To Apply For Eligibility And To Bid

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites all interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Security Services for CY 2011.

Services	Approved Budget for the Contract
A. Security	Php 7,208,385.36

All bids in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures based on the governing rules of Republic Act 9184, the Government Procurement Reform Act.

Bidding documents and instruction to bidders may be obtained from the office of the Internal Management and Services Division (IMSD), Requests unit c/o Ms. Rajna from December 21 to January 5, 2010 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP 1,000.00.

Pre-bid conference shall be held on January 5, 2010, 2:00 PM at the Conference Room, 4th DOLE-NCR Building, 1007 Philippine St., Makati, Manila. Bid proposal shall be accompanied with a bid security.

Deadline for submission of eligibility requirements, technical proposal, and financial bid shall be on 12 January 2011, 10:00 AM. Late bids shall not be accepted. Opening of bidding documents shall be held at the same venue on 12 January 2011 at 2:00 PM.

The DOLE-NCR reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waives any minor informality therein. DOLE-NCR assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

AVITO E. STO. TOMAS
BAC Chairman

dti

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1. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), intends to apply the sum of Two Million Four Hundred Thousand Pesos (P2,400,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to cover the cost of the Supply, Delivery and Installation of Computer Packages, Arc Design and Delivery of On-Site Training Program on Basic Computer Literacy for PCP's4 (Luzon & Visayas) (PCP's4 Project).
2. The DTI now invites bids for the supply, delivery and installation of computer packages and arc design and delivery of on-site training program on basic computer literacy for PCP's4 (Luzon & Visayas) (PCP's4 Project). Bidders should have completed, within the last three (3) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an equipment is detailed in the Terms of Reference (TOR), Section VII of the Bidding Documents.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act".

Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to RA 5183.

4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from DTI and review the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. daily, Monday to Friday.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested bidders beginning on 21 December 2010 from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00).
6. Two (2) sets of the Duly Filled Out Bids shall be received on 12 January 2011, 9:30 AM at the Center Conference Room, 4/F Trade & Industry Building, DTI Bldg. 1, Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City, Metro Manila.
7. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 9:30 AM on the date above. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in ITB Clause 18.
8. Bid opening shall be on 12 January 2011. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below. Late bids shall not be accepted.
9. The DTI reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bid(s), to annul the bidding process, and to reject at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.
10. For further information, please refer to:

Mr. Benjamin B. Pineda
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
4/F Trade & Industry Building
DTI Bldg. 1, Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City
Telephone Nos. 751-3330 to 39 local 2005
Telefax No. 751-3330 local 2005

(Sgd.) ANGELITO T. BALDOZA
Chairman, BAC
Chairperson, DTI Bids and Awards Committee

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- Create and coordinate design detail and their practicability
- Monitor and ensure quality of work on site

ELECTRICAL ENGINEER (1)

Qualifications:
- Age 25 and above
- Experienced in high rise building construction
- Self motivated and can work independently
- Knowledge in Value Engineering

Duties and Responsibilities:
- Check and review electrical design intent
- Coordinate electrical drawings in relation to other trades
- Monitor specifications, sources of materials, determines their availability and procurement
- Create and coordinate details of construction
- Monitor and evaluate progress of works
- Monitor and ensure quality of works on site

CASHIER (1)

Qualifications:
- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor of Arts Degree or any Business course or equivalent
- At least 1 year experience as cashier
- Age: 25 and above
- Preferably female
- Computer literate
- Proficient in MS Office applications
- Knowledge in PCA experience an advantage

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Please be advised that CEO EVENTS AND EXPOS ORGANIZERS INC. a/k/a CEO EVENTS AND EXPOS ORGANIZERS INC. with business address at Unit 104 Mezzanine Floor, Cityland 10 Tower I, 6815 Ayala Ave. cor. H. Cabao, Bonanza City, will be filing an application for dissolution with Securities and Exchange Commission effective January 14, 2011.

Any person or company having claims against the company are requested to go to the above mentioned business address for immediate settlement.

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OBITUARIES

"Remember us now the days of our youth, remember us only in light of your love..." Psalm 20:7

Col. Basilia Abella Cantoria, NC (Ret.)

joined peacefully her Creator on 19th December 2010 at the age of 88

Her beloved sister, Florencia Cantoria Alba; Sis. Virginia (+), Bro. Francisco (+), Sis. Angeles (+), Bro. Bernardo (+), Sis. Amelia (+), nieces, nephews and relatives request the prayers readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at St. Peter Memorial Chapel in Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at Heritage Hillpark, date will be announced later.

Whosoever finds his life will lose it, and whosoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
Matthew 10:39

The Family of the late

†LEOPOLDO ABAD LADUB

Peacefully joined his Creator on December 15, 2010 at the age of 77.

His loving wife Inez; daughter Malou and granddaughter Louie sincerely extend our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all who offered prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy, visited and kept vigil in our hour of sorrow, attended the funeral rites and services and in many ways condoled us in our moments of grief.

Maraming SALAMAT PO. May God Bless You All.

The Directors, Management and Staff
of the **ICCP Group**

announce with deep sorrow the demise of

LEONARDO T. SIGUION-REYNA

Director

Investment & Capital Corporation of the Philippines
ICCP Holdings Corporation
ICCP Venture Partners, Inc.
ICCP Ventures Inc.
Pueblo de Oro Development Corporation
Regatta Properties, Inc.
Science Park of the Philippines, Inc.

who peacefully joined his Creator
on December 19, 2010 at the age of 69.

His ICCP Group Family request for prayers
for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies at Capilla del Señor,
Santuario de San Antonio, McKinley Road,
Forbes Park, Makati City.

JESUS S. IBAÑEZ, SR.

joined his Creator
on 20 December 2010 at the age of 80

Bereaved are his: **TERESA** (Abbie), **ROBERT, ROLANDO, JESS Jr., DANILO, LEONILA** and **EMILY**; sons-in-law, daughters-in-law and grandchildren request the prayers readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapel, 12 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Cremation will be at The Arlington Crematorium, Quezon City on 23 December, 2010 after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at Arlington Chapel.

IRENEO "RUDY" V. REYES, JR.

Retiree of Distribution/
United Laboratories, Inc.

peacefully joined his Creator
on December 20, 2010
at the age of 71.

His body lies in state at
Our Lady of Peace Chapel,
Cariguara St. near Antipolo
Cathedral, Antipolo City.

Interment
to be announced later.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord." - 2 Corinthians 5:8

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

BUSINESS

Rise in economic indicators slowing, NSCB says

Lower trade volumes, prices of goods offset tourism, peso gains

By Reuwel W. Daenagas

THE RISE in the composite leading economic indicators (LEI) slowed down in the fourth quarter as dampened prices of goods as well as easing trade volumes offset gains from tourism and the strong peso, the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) said.

NSCB data show that the quarter-to-quarter growth in the composite LEI—composed of 11 indexes including inflation, construction, and stock prices—rose by only 0.0222 point in the third quarter to 0.0226 point in the fourth quarter.

The latest growth figure from 0.022 point in the third quarter to 0.0226 point in the fourth quarter represents "the dissonance due to the composite LEI since the fourth quarter of 2009 when the index featured positive[] after five quarters of a downward streak," NSCB officer in charge Lisa Ti Tinio said in a report.

This means that while the economy has recovered from the worst of the global financial crisis, the pace of overall growth has been declining.

The composite LEI relates to 11 components, namely total merchandise imports, wholesale price index, wholesale price index, food[] outlook, stock price index, electric energy consumption, hotel occupancy rate, excess supply, number of new businesses, house of trade index and foreign exchange rate.

Tinio said four of the 11 indicators, only six contributed positively to the composite LEI.

In comparison, there were no positive zero and 11 of those indicators contributed positively in the second and third quarters.

Tinio also said positive contributions in the fourth quarter accounted for only 51.5 percent of the composite LEI.

The share of positive contributors dropped from 68.5 percent in the third quarter and 100 percent in the second quarter.

For the current quarter, the top positive contributor is tourist arrivals, benefiting from "the start of the peak season."

Other positive contributors are the number of new businesses, foreign exchange rate, stock price index, hotel occupancy rate and electric energy consumption.

The top negative contributor is the wholesale price index, the rise of which slowed down in the previous quarter.

Based on available data from the National Statistics Office, the increase in wholesale prices settled on 3.6 percent year-on-year, the slowest since January.

Other negative contributors are house of trade index, consumer price index, money supply, and total merchandise imports.

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Call centers out to boost public image

By Abigail L. Ho

AMID ALLEGATIONS that the industry is breeding cyber sex dens, the Contact Center Association of the Philippines has decided to step up its information and education efforts next year.

CCAP director Boog Bejo said that even implying that cyber sex dens are part of the business process outsourcing industry runs "baseless accusations."

For foreigners (like the country-to-be-identified)...It's easier to understand such allegations because they know what really goes on in the industry, that it's no den for the parents and the prospective employees to understand," he related.

"We've worked so hard to convince people not to consider a career in the industry and to prove to their parents that this is a good industry. With allegations like these, parents may become suspicious," he added.

To counter these negative impressions, CCAP president Benedicto Hernandez said the industry group would be more proactive in its information and education campaigns, and would regularly come out with good news about the industry instead of just reacting to the things that come out in the news.

"We're doing all we can to make a positive employee environment. Our business is one of the cost bright spots in the country. We're all for stopped cyber sex[] activities that exploit Filipinos," he said.

He added that CCAP was ready to partner with the National Bureau of Investigation to help catch those cyber sex den operators by providing the necessary technologies to aid in the detection of such operations.

Ramon Ang, Commission on Information and Communications Technology chair, said fly-and-cyber sex operations were not and would never be part of the BPO universe and should not be linked to the industry in any way.

"Cyber sex and illegal sex dens as reported recently is pervasive on the worldwide web and they can be[] completely from various businesses. It is not being celebrated in the Philippines, so we should not attribute or compare cyber porn with our flourishing BPO industry," he said.

Business Processing Association of the Philippines chief executive Oscar Salas Hontoria emphasized safety precautions, saying the people members took offense that the industry was being linked to illegal acts.

"Cyber sex is not BPO. It's pure pornography. Cyber sex dens are not at all related to BPO and offshoring. We're enacting strongly against [selling cyber sex dens as BPO players]. Para lo para sabihin ng gobyerno, television or the Web. It's being done anywhere. It's not outsourcing," he said.

ERC allows Magat to continue operations

By Aury R. Bunoc

THE ENERGY Regulatory Commission has allowed SN Aboitiz Power-Magat Inc. (SNAP-Magat) to continue operating the 360-megawatt hydroelectric power plant in Isabela after complying with regulatory requirements.

According to ERC, it renewed SNAP-Magat's certificate of compliance (COC) after the company complied with strict technical, financial and environmental standards set by the ERC.

The COC renewal allows SNAP-Magat's hydroelectric power plant in Ramon, Isabela to continue operating operations for at least another five years.

"The ERC is glad that the hydroelectric power plant formerly owned by the government and now run by SNAP-Magat remains to be in good operating condition. The renewable energy-run plants help the country go clean and green to cater to help mitigate the ill effects of global warming," said ERC chair and CEO Zenaida G. Cruz-Durod.

SNAP-Magat, a joint venture between Aboitiz Power Corp. and SN Power, listed six of 360-mw acquired the 360-megawatt Magat hydroelectric power plant in 2007. The hydropower facility is powered by water from the Magat River in Ramon, Isabela.

The Magat Dam is a multipurpose dam used for power generation and irrigation for about 85,000 hectares of agricultural lands.

The dam is controlled by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), while SNAP-Magat owns and operates the power plant.

The generation company currently sells 10 percent of its power output to five electric cooperatives through separate bilateral contracts.

The rest of SNAP-Magat's generated power is traded on the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market.

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LIFESTYLE Wellness

Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

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■ **'Sinigang' is healthier** than 'lechon' /C3

■ **These shoes we tested** were made for running /C4

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KLAGER and Encarnacion work on building the core muscles.

CERTIFIED trainer Von Manalo shows Peter Carreon how to do the parallel lunges to strengthen the hamstrings and core.

MACHO, and more flattering silhouette of the Tony Chol do rousing exercises to prepare the patients and cure for the impending exercises.

New workout sculpts muffin tops

It promises to whittle your waist and round out your butt

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

CHRISTINA "TINA" Tellano-Lagdameo hates doughnuts and ice cream for a living, but it doesn't show. Tiny and youthful, the marketing director of her family's business, Go Nuts Donuts, gets toned by doing two consecutive classes to the advanced level of an exercise method called Pilates Fortus.

Brother-in-law Josel Manuel "JM" Lagdameo, a businessman and sportsman, describes it as a compact and comprehensive conditioning workout for extremely busy people. Although he was cycling for eight years and losing weight, he could not get rid of fat from his buddha. After doing Pilates Fortus, he gained muscle definition, got a taken aw waistline, and blood flowing.

Based on a patented workout called Physique 57, Pilates Fortus has become the Holy Grail for sculpting the muffin top (the excess skin flopping over the waistband) and for tempting the pectin.

Pilates Fortus is a program of orthopedic and ballet barre exercises, coupled with weight resistance using light dumbbells and body weight. Muscles are strengthened through prolonged contraction or incessant repetition until the point of exhaustion, then stretched to aid in recovery before orchestrating another exercise. All these are paced to bring the heart rate up.

Celebrity sightings

The program's predecessor, Physique 57, was established by Phill Hiner (Gisele Bundchen, Madonna, Cameron Diaz) and Lotte Berk method.

Berk was a German dancer who developed a strengthening program based on ballet and physical therapy. When Berk succumbed her exhaustion but didn't want to sell her business, Maureen assumed to continue her program. She then contracted top fitness instructor Tonya Becker to adapt Berk's workout, and mapped out her business plan.

That discovered Physique 57 in New York when her husband, Gary Lagdameo, was taking his MBA at Columbia Business School. In her first class, she loved the intensity and discovery of activating strained or smaller muscle groups. "I'm a frustrated dancer. I hate going to the gym. This made me want to work out because it had some dance elements."

When the shared her experience, Gary told her that he had coincidentally just listened to a lecture on entrepreneurship given by Maureen, a Columbia alumna.

This diligently exercised, with TV host Kelly Ripa as her classmate. Gyrosexually she could spot Shoreline Mr. Cunningham, Jessye Deschanel, Sarah Jessica Parker and Parker Posey.

TINA Tellano-Lagdameo and brother-in-law JM Lagdameo get stronger and toned bodies with Pilates Fortus.

CERTIFIED trainers Julie Angelo-Carreon and Celine Encarnacion work on the obliques and lower legs. Good for strengthening bone harmony.

After having two kids, she finally found an exercise that rekindled dozen her waistline. "My best friend went from nine 8 to a 2 after taking classes religiously for four months," adds Tina.

Through Columbia business school's alcohol department, the Lagdameos approached Maureen and asked if they could set up a Philippine franchise of Physique 57. The founder said she won't join franchising. Soon Tina and Gary were flying to New York every month for training.

Nevertheless, they managed to strengthen the Philippines because the only country outside of the US to offer Physique 57, under the name Pilates Fortus.

Cara Tina, JM and his wife Cecilia "Yeyi" Rodriguez-Lagdameo formed LC Corporation for their fitness business, of which the brothers Cote and Bel are president and vice president, respectively.

The classes will be held next year in Asia Prime Building, Bonifacio Global City.

The three instructors, Julie Angelo-Carreon, Celine Encarnacion and Van Manalo, are professional dancers who have been trained and certified by Becker. Physique 57's cofounder. They have to fly to New York regularly for their continuing education and certification updates.

Working the waist

The workout requires a thick mat and a trainer, a playground ball, a karate belt, light dumbbells and a ballet barre. Pilates Fortus's key concepts involve second resistance, firing up muscles through small, intense and sustained movements and interval overload, executing more repetitions until the muscles tremble, between short rests. Strength is built in muscle fatigue and endurance is built in muscle tension for a longer length of time.

The 55-minute workout starts with upper body exercises on barre knees, establishing the correct posture and strengthening the upper body and arms. These are followed by barre exercises for the big muscles, the legs. The exercises work on the muscles supporting the knees and ankles, and also improve balance.

Then the workout moves to the mat muscles and lower back. The abdominal series works our all layers of the abdomen, from the upper to the lower rectus, the six-pack and the sides. These exercises also strengthen the lower back. The classes end with a five-minute cool-down. Re-stressed. Quiet-ing is essential.

"You will get sore at first, but don't get discouraged. You will feel better and your stance will improve. Even if you don't set out to lose weight, you end up losing inches," says JM.

Juliet Stafford Perez Carreon, a graphic designer, was disclosed exercise. When he took up Hans Fortus, he lost four inches from his waist line in two months. His measurements dropped from 36 to to 32 in even without dieting.

Benefits

JM recommends Pilates Fortus for cross-training in sports as it strengthens the core muscles and improves alignment and breathing. "I thought my stamina was good, but with Pilates Fortus, it got even better."

Julie says the exercises helped correct her cross back and hood her from back pain. "I once had a flat stent, and now it's rounded."

Van was coping with a knee injury; even crossing his legs was painful. Unlike other programs which focus on the lower body, Pilates Fortus also strengthens the lower thighs and hamstrings, the other important muscles supporting the knees. When he started his training in New York, his body was shaped like a Colorado bottle. After three weeks of training, he trimmed down, and his knee no longer bothered him.

Pilates Fortus centers imbalances by targeting the weak or neglected muscles. No two classes are exactly the same. In every class, different sets of muscles are emphasized.

Jaime Aviles, "Classes often say, 'I covers know those muscles existed.'"

For details on Pilates Fortus, call (917) 7-FITNESS.

Reader asks, 'Where did man originate?'

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licaros

HERE'S AN intriguing question from a Filipino reader based in Dubai:

"I've read a number of your books. I am a documentary filmmaker based in Dubai and I hope to feature you in my television series on human evolution[ary] or paleocontext project.

"I am confused about the idea of God or Source. Isn't many are those exactly in the universe. If you've heard about James Gilliland, Dr. Brooke Agnew, U. Hurtak, Lisa Renee, even Zecharia Sitchin, they all share the same premise that we come from the ETs...so we are all evolved from different alien beings back when the Earth was still beginning. Do you agree?

"Can you share your thoughts about God, Source and how human sentience? Did we come from the Annunaki? How question are important to me."

Of the names you mentioned, I am only familiar with Zecharia Sitchin, whose books I have read, and Dr. Hunter J. Hurtak of the academy for Future Science, whom I had personally met several times in the mid-'90s.

I do not think you can find a definitive or categorical answer to your question. Perhaps only God can answer that with finality.

Having said that, let me share with you my thoughts on the matter.

As you know, there are two major theories on how the world began, and by extension, how human came to be. The first is the Creation Theory, which postulates the existence of a Supreme Being called God, who created the universe and everything in it. The other is the Big Bang Theory, favored by scientists like Stephen Hawking, which states that the universe just sprang up by one supernatural explosion at the beginning of time. The theory postulates the existence of a Creator or God.

The theory of researcher Zecharia Sitchin offers a third view which is not discussed in academic, scientific or religious circles, but which for me has strong intellectual appeal.

The theory based on Sitchin's extensive research on ancient documents, and later Babylonian texts and legends, states that man was created by very advanced beings called Annunaki, who came to Earth from the planet Nibiru. The term "Annunaki," according to Sitchin, literally means "those who from heaven to earth came." They are referred to in Genesis as "Sethites," which to Sitchin means the same thing: "those who have come down from the heavens to earth," but which has been mistranslated as "fallen angels." They came down to earth around 445,000 years ago.

According to Sitchin man was created by the Annunaki (Hebrew) by mixing their essence with the humanoid, robot-like creatures they had earlier created to work on the gold mines in Africa. Their planet Nibiru's atmosphere was thinning and needed gold to cover it up. They searched the entire universe and found gold only on planet Earth. So the primitive workers were sent there on a mission. But the difficult task these civilizing primitive workers were made to do caused them to rebel. So the Annunaki decided to reduce their toils them and created a spirit in order to be like them. They were from the Hebrew being they called "slaves," meaning "from the Earth."

Sitchin's theory of how humans came to exist resembles both the Big Bang and Creation Theories. In his revolutionary book "The 12th Planet," Sitchin states that "Evolution can explain the general course of events that caused life and life's form to develop on Earth from the simplest one-celled creature to Man. But evolution cannot account for the appearance of Homo Sapiens, which happened virtually overnight in terms of the millions of years evolution required. Man is the product of evolution, but Modern Man, Homo Sapiens, is the product of the gods." Around 300,000 years ago, the Sitchin took Apa man (homo erectus) and implanted on him their own image and likeness.

According to Sitchin the story of creation, found in the Book of Genesis, "is but an edited version of the Sumerian reports."

Do I agree? Yes, I can sympathize to the ideas of Sitchin because they make much more sense to me than the dichotomy between Creationism and Big Bang theories. Sitchin's theory, as I said, reconciles both theories.

Perhaps there is only one Supreme God but there are many lesser gods. Many ancient civilizations, particularly Egypt, held such a belief. They believed in many gods but they also believed there is a Supreme Being above all of them.

That's the essence there in Genesis, we read "Let us make man in our own image." The subject used is a plural one.

Note: For inquiries on books, paranormal services, personal consultancy and seminars on Inner Mind Development, E.S.P and out-of-body experience, call Jaime Licaros at (02) 8711243, cellular 09189000, e-mail jaimelicaros@yahoo.com. Visit www.jaimelicaros.com.

'Sinigang' is healthier than 'lechon'

By Mitch Felipe-Mendoza
Contributor

IT'S THE time of year when every one gets confused trying to eat healthy. Meats and more foods are becoming accessible this Christmas.

In reality, it's difficult for us to follow the healthiest eating plan at this time.

Here's a list of the worst, the better and the best common holiday food choices to help you make smarter decisions, so you can still avoid weight gain.

Here's a list of the best and worst common holiday food choices to help you avoid weight gain

Breakfast

Eat breakfast to avoid cravings and not overeat. Start your breakfast, but stay away from any meals.

Worst choices (600-800 calories/serving): fried rice with longganisa and egg, fried lamb brown with fried egg, sausage and bacon.

Better choices (400-500 calories/serving): two-piece pancake with less syrup and butter, three-piece pan-hotdog with less butter.

Best choices (300-400 calories/serving): oatmeal with fruit, whole grain cereals with fat-free milk, plain rice with cooked fish and vegetables.

Breads

Choose plain breads to avoid extra calories from cheese, butter and oil. Avoid yellow and flavorful sweet breads. Sweeter pastries covered by chocolate wonder since if you can't eat without breads.

Worst choices (300-500 calories/piece): fried breads and donuts, muffins, croissant with sausage.

Better choices (150-200 calories/piece): small bagels, large white bread and pandesal, light and baked donuts.

Best choices (80-100 calories/piece): small wheat pandesal, small wheat bread, whole grain breads, reduce tortillas.

Vegetables

A cup of fruit veggie here or there as 20-50 calories. Calories only differ because of additional sauces, oil, and butter. Choose the simplest and boldest vegetables all the time.

Worst choices (200-400 calories/serving): fried kangkong, gisantang gulay (chop) steamed spinach.

Better choices (120-200 calories/serving): stir-fried veggies (chopsuey), sizzling baby veggies with garlic.

Best choices (80-100 calories/serving): salad greens with light dressing, steamed broccoli and carrots, boiled veggies from soup dishes.

Seafood

One of the most common diet mistakes is choosing seafood regardless of how it is cooked. Avoid what's deep-fried.

Worst choices (250-500 calories/serving): deep fried shrimp (tempura), sweet and sour fish, fish and chips calderetas.

Better choices (100-200 calories/serving): sauteed seafoods (stir-veggies), stir-fried veggies, inasal or ihaw.

Best choices (50-150 calories/serving): steamed fish, grilled shrimp or bangus, boiled fish with veggies.

Chicken

Always avoid deep-fried, oily and battered chicken dishes and consume all or 50 percent of the chicken skin. Lower the excess even if you choose barbecue meats, since excess also contains lots of calories and oil.

Worst choices (300-500 calories/serving): deep-fried chicken with skin (fried leg quarter, wing, thigh).

Better choices (200-300 calories/serving): fried chicken without skin, chicken barbecue, stir-fried chicken.

Best choices (120-200 calories/serving): steamed chicken, roasted chicken, boiled chicken (adobo) without skin.

Pork and beef

Always remove the visible pork and beef fat, since these meats usually contain hidden fats in between the lean parts. Choose leaded lean meats with lots of veggies, like soups or stirring dishes.

Worst choices (300-500 calories/serving): fried lechon with skin, crispy pata, pata, sweet and sour pork, chicharon, processed meats (bologna, kindson meats), fried dumplings.

Better choices (200-300 calories/serving): lean pork tenderloin, lechon without fat and skin, steamed dumplings.

Best choices (100-200 calories/serving): roast pork and beef without fat, boiled lean beef and pork (sulpas or nilaga).

Sandwich and salad

Another common diet mistake is choosing a salad and sandwich meal regardless of mayonnaise content and how it was cooked. The most plain looking sandwich or salad is still the best choice. Try to avoid fast-food sandwiches or raw salads (lots dressings or raw salads).

Worst choices (500-750 calories/serving): tuna sandwich with lots of mayonnaise, crispy chicken or fish sandwich, double-patty burgers with cheese.

Better choices (400-500 calories/serving): ham sandwich, roast beef sandwich.

Best choices (300-400 calories/serving): roasted chicken breast sandwich, turkey sandwich, salmon sandwich, plain grilled hamburger sandwich.

Fast food

Inside a mall, you can still enjoy a pizza pie, as long as you choose lighter versions. It can help you avoid half the calories of regular pizza, like crispy or stuffed crust pizza, hamburger with tuna and cheese fries, cream dessert pasta.

Better choices (150-350 calories/serving): thin crust veggie pizza, tomato-based seafood or chicken pasta.

Best choices (80-100 calories/serving): tuna can a cola with chicken taco with less cheese, side salad without dressing.

Snacks and desserts

In-between samples control appetizers, it's not advisable to feed depressions. Eat smaller portions of your high-calorie choices or go for the lower calories. Or treat that you really enjoy, but also in moderation.

Worst choices (200-500 calories/serving): potato chips, large cookie, cheesecake, brownies, regular ice cream with chocolate and nuts, milkshake.

Better choices (150-200 calories/serving): baked chips, fat-free popcorn, plain salty with less syrup, dark chocolate, low-fat ice cream.

Best choices (50-150 calories/serving): breakfast bagels (tuna, shrimp, etc.), plain cookies, plain yogurt, plain gelatin, pretzels.

Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages

Alcoholic beverages will definitely increase your appetite. Drink in consideration and choose the lighter versions. You can sweet out a limit per week or per drinking occasion.

Worst choices (300-500 calories/glass): regular soft drinks, regular beer, hard liquor drinks, creamy flavored coffee drinks.

Better choices (50-150 calories/glass): fat-reduced soda and soft drinks, red wine, light beer, fruit shakes and coffee drinks with reduce milk.

Best choices (0-100 calories/glass): plain drinking water, plain brewed coffee, hot tea (both by made but juice).

E-mail the author at mitchfelipe@gmail.com.

Mosquito repellent—in trendy wristband, bag clip forms

By Irene C. Perez

FACT 11, mosquitoes are a global health threat and there isn't any place in the world that doesn't have mosquitoes.

That's according to Olivier Parisot, founding partner of PureTrim mosquito repellent. He says mosquitoes are found even in developing countries, although the insects particularly like tropical countries like the Philippines.

"They're transported around the world via men of vehicles, in all modes of travel. They lay eggs on trees, and these hatch in different destinations," Parisot says.

Mosquito bites are dangerous and cause diseases such as dengue, malaria, encephalitis, so it is best to be prevented.

PureTrim, a mosquito repellent line from France, aims to give kids and adults hassle-free...even fashionable and fun—protection.

Waterproof, convenient

PureTrim comes in a refillable and long-lasting wristband, various colors and designs, in water-resistant neoprene material.

The anti-mosquito repellent is in the thin woven, pulsar pellet, which is worn on arm being used infused with natural oils.

A counter push button found in clip, and two pellets that last up to 15 days each (P550; refill pellets are sold in pairs (P400, or P35 per day).

Jerrod Amaris, president of Ideal Brewing Co., local distributor of PureTrim, says this is cheaper than using lotions and lotions or coils.

Here's how it works: The pellet has the essence of seven natural oils known to repel mosquitoes citronella, lavender, peppermint, geranium, lemongrass, cinnamon and vanilla—removed around the world, from France to Ghana. The patented technology allows the slow release of this essence, and spreads out throughout the day.

Unlike topical formulas such as sticky lotions and gels, PureTrim doesn't require application and can be used even while on the hands. It has a fresh odour smell with peppermint undertones.

The adjustable wristband with Velcro fastener in four pieces. Revery pure, latest and latest to colors such as blue, orange, black, camouflage, yellow and pink. It fits all wrists.

If you are not too crazy about bands, there are clips in black, green, camouflage, purple, red and orange are out from into your luggage, bags or belt.

Parisot, who is based in France, says mosquito-related diseases are a big issue in his country as well as in the rest of Europe, and that's where PureTrim was born. The product has been a hit in the UK, Holland, Switzerland, Slovenia, China and is now available to select shops in the Philippines.

PureTrim says the bond in your scalp so that the "moderator" go up and provide better protection to the rest of the body. He especially recommends it to travelers and those who are often outdoors.

According to the PureTrim website, 88 "Mosquitoes belong to a group of insects that requires blood to develop bottle eggs." Thus, only female mosquitoes bite, the itching and swelling that we experience come from the small amount of saliva it injects before drawing blood.

PureTrim is available at Bistro Bistro at Eds Bistro, Anching bar H2O, Planet Sports, Decathlon's Zoo, Innovators, Iron Horse, SGC Brewing and other provinces.

Look for PureTrim on Facebook for complete list of stores. Visit www.puretrim.com.ph or www.puretrim.com.

NEO HERBS exec president David Aquino, PR director Cora Peñalosa and PureTrim branding partner Olivier Parisot

Women attract more mosquitoes than men

- There are around 3,000 species of mosquitoes around the world.
- Normal-sized men's mosquitoes than men because of the different sizes in hormones.
- The insects like blondes more than brunettes.
- Smelly beer as well as dark clothing attract mosquitoes.
- Bigger and hotter people are often mosquito targets because they produce more lactic acid and carbon dioxide. Mosquitoes aren't attracted to our smell but to such carbon dioxide and lactic acid we produce.

Source: Parisot

Special Feature

ARTHRITIS Q&A

by Perry P. Tan, M.D., FPCP, FPRA

Q: What is NSAI? I heard it several times during my consultation with a rheumatologist.

A: In rheumatology, NSAI stands for nonsteroidal antirheumatic. It is a screening laboratory examination that detects if an individual has an autoimmune disease. Examples of autoimmune diseases are rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, systemic sclerosis, dermatomyositis, and many more.

Our immune system fights infections and looks internal viruses when we are sick. In patients with autoimmune diseases, their body's immune system through anti-nuclear autoantibodies produces abnormal antibodies known as auto-antibodies which do not know how to distinguish healthy body tissues from the sick and damaged tissues. The auto-antibodies attack and trigger a cascade of inflammatory activities that destroy our own normal healthy tissues.

The presence of these antibodies can be detected through a simple examination called ANA. A patient who is positive to ANA means that a person may have an autoimmune disease such as rheumatoid arthritis or lupus. However, ANA as a laboratory exam may sometimes provide false results where some patients get positive results even if they are healthy and others get negative even if they have full blown features of the disease. Therefore, appropriate clinical judgement of a rheumatologist is needed.

ANA can be further categorized into several subtypes, and RA for rheumatoid arthritis, and the SLE, and not 7% for scleroderma, etc.

Dr. Perry P. Tan is currently the chairman of the Department of Medicine and head/founder of the Rheumatology Clinic at the Asia Royal Memorial Medical Center. He is the president of Arthritis Care Foundation and former president of the Philippine Rheumatology Association. At present, he holds an appointment at the Asia Royal Memorial Medical Center, St. Luke's Medical Center, and Metropolitan Medical Center. For inquiries, you may call 7363-0000.

These shoes we tested were made for running

By Kristin R. Jacobson

Want a pair with biodegradable midsoles, or a barefoot feel? Here are four high-tech new models

ADIDAS Glycerin 8. Available at Runner Beanie in High Street and Cedar, and selected Today's Sports outlets

VIBRAM FiveFingers Bikila. Available at Perception Hall; 213 Whitney, Barrie; $185; 2/3 SPORTS of Alta opening January 2011 in Tony's MDL and Megamall. Chinese Department Store, Downs

NEWTON Nimoz, available at Runner Bill and Cedar, and selected Today's Sports outlets

MERRELL CT Converge 2, available at Dillons, Market Mall, Foothill Mall and Apple Core Cobs

Brooks Glycerin 8

Price: $169

This has been awarded the prestigious Editor's Choice by Runner's World in March (the years The Glycerin has also been lauded itself as a footlocker, an environment-friendly mattress—it's the world's first fully biodegradable midsole that decomposes 50 per cent faster than conventional midsoles.

The Glycerin 8 is a neutral shoe, meaning it is recommended for normal to high-arched runners. It features the Brooks DNA Cushioning System, a technology akin to enclosed-cushioning that's adaptable to your stride. A moderate jog, for instance, will give the runner a "softer" ride, while a speed run will make the shoes more solid, giving you that firm support when you need it and fleet-footing the force of impact away from your feet.

If you're used to soft cushioning, the Glycerin 8 will feel more solid under your feet even during moderate jogs. It rides considerably and comfortably. It is snug to your foot—won't be moving around excessively while in it.

The arch support is good and the toe box well-cushioned, making it a good choice for barefoot runners, as well. (If you have less arches or if you are flat-footed, you will need orthotics.) It closes. Compared to other light running shoes, however, the Glycerin 8 is on the heavy side at 10.3 oz.

Another factor to consider is the heel: nearly 10 millimetres. We think the Glycerin 8's is a tad too high. A quick 5- or 7k run will not make much difference with the regular heel count you're used to, but when we tested it past 15k, the achilles notch got on blisters. Solution: Wear ankle high socks for protection. A good fit is normally a safe bigger too.

Overall, though, the Glycerin 8 gives comfortable ride. It gives good traction, and about 80 per cent of the material used is breathable.

Vibram FiveFingers Bikila

Price: $174.95

There's so much hype about barefoot running these days, we've actually seen runners doing it, so what's the big deal?

The Vibram FiveFingers is a minimalist shoe. Billed like a glove. The first time you wear them will feel strange, not only because they're lightweight (the women's Bikila is 4.35 oz each), but because you will suddenly be keenly aware of the ground under your feet. There are close to 8,000 nerves in a foot, and most of them will register sensation that they have never felt before.

Telling the 5FF on the road felt like learning how to run again—and quite literally undo-covering the earth. When you hit a tree pebble, you will have it. The ground feedback, in fact, is essential to learn over the proper foot-strike (forefoot that will lead to a better running form.

Maybe you never thought you had—or never felt you had—enough to good use. Even a strong and/or stressed runner will find out just about everywhere after the first few runs. And this is how your feet supposedly become stronger.

The 5FFs are a little challenging to put on the first few times, and finding the right size is especially tricky if you have large or tiny toes. They're so flexible, you bend them until they almost fold, making them post-morning foot stretches a breeze.

A harshest running for everyone? If you have arches you'll probably benefit from wearing regular runners with arch support and cushion. And do start slow—no more than 3k. If you're experienced runners, these recommended shoes aren't for you, they are, so you shouldn't be worried about stepping out debut on the road.

Newton Trainers

Price: $159

While not exactly a minimalist shoe, the Newton Trainer will ease you into this discipline of forefoot. Despite the odd sensation of the lugs when standing still, the Newtons feel surprisingly stable when running. If your land properly on your forefoot, you will feel the lugs propel you forward. It is light, too, at 8.7 oz.

Do not wear on long distance runs if you intend sustain hindfoot-running (the native state, or most of the time.

Merrell CT Converge 2

Price: $129.95

Merrell has always been viewed as good outdoor gear, so it came as a surprise when a hiker-based food shoes a couple of years ago. Its have done a enjoyable trail-running shoe, company lost on the road? Funny good.

The CT Converge 2 comfortably maintains comfortable under the foot with a good, supportive heel cup. The midsole is ideal for long-distance running. It has good traction and road grip, although we don't know how the shoe holds up on wet roads, since we tested it in dry when we road-tested them, unfortunately.

As a neutral shoe, the arch support is average. If you're flat-footed, you're better off with models for shoe that stand more stability features. The upper mesh is breathable, but not so airy as other leading road-running shoes. Still, we don't think this poses a problem, even during the only part of summer. Even better, the moisture-wicking liner keeps it smelling fresh.

Breaking in this shoe was harder than we didn't experience any trade-issues in the shin or heel. The gPhase midsole cushioning technology, designed to absorb shock, does a great job of that the first few runs are already comfortable. This is a green model, as well, with the upper mesh made from recycled materials.

If you're a running newbie, this is a good investment. If you're an old-timer, the CT Converge 2, marketed as a high-mileage trainer, feels solid and durable.

Q & A on great skin, great health

IS YOUR answer, I search the answers to numerous questions that can contribute to your enhanced beauty and good health. While there are many ways to achieve the best of looking and feeling good, more often than not, the secret to success begins with you. And so, if you're ready to put your mind to do just that, then read on.

Q: Dis eczema/psoriasis? My complexion is compromised.

This case you will need to address from the inside out first to the outside. Analyze what exactly you are eating. You have to eliminate the following causes:

- Food allergies—the/hope you tried substance is low-treated shellfish, chicken, peanuts, dairy etc. Rule this out by asking your physician.
- Dehydration—If you are drinking less than 64 glasses daily chances are you may be dehydrated.
- Chemicals—Change any cosmetics you are using that may contain harsh ingredients. Dilute or irritate the 17-year-old developed an allergy to a well known hypoallergenic line.)
- Stress—Yes, your emotions and stress is obvious can make you have a constant complexion—good today, bad tomorrow. Find out your triggers. And stay cool.
- Poor diet—Without a doubt, you can not need super-strategies. If you are not taking enough vitamins with your food regimen, then it's time to consider supplements. My favourite vitamin (also because it contains anti-inflammatory) choose in it is. Because the human body cannot produce vitamin C, a regular intake of the vitamin can improve your health, specifically and improve.
- Inside-Out—Vitamin C is a natural protector of the skin.
- Healing—speeds up wound healing.
- Tissue builder—repairs injured tissue and promotes tissue growth while building collagen. But what kind of vitamin C should we look down? The general dose required for skin improvement and maintenance is 200-500 mg. If you increase the dosage from 1,000-3,000 mg daily, it is always safest to take vitamin C in its calcium state, which is the natural choice of health enthusiasts who suffer gastric irritation when taking vitamin C in ordinary ascorbate or plain ascorbic acid. Be careful if you take acidic vitamin C in high doses because this may eventually cause hypertension and kidney problems. To do: Snack on vitamin C rich foods such as oranges, guava and kiwi. Boost your vitamin C intake with 500-1,000 mg of calcium ascorbate daily after meals. Pick up 1 weeks you will notice your complexion clearing up. Also, visit a dermatologist for regular cleaning, exfoliation and facial once a month.

Cory Quiviano, Co. Inc. – 780/771, 49137, 3045351, cqdiscovery.com

Q: My cholesterol levels are high. Any natural remedies?

Believe it or not one of the ways to manage your cholesterol is to keep your HDL or good cholesterol high. Cholesterol is the antioxidant levels in your body via omega-rich nutritious meals, generous doses of ACES (VITAMINS A, C, E and M, for-one your three tender. Instead of taking just regular oatmeal, try the organic variety in the form of golden oats, which are grown in Australia. According to World Health Organization, oat protein is nearly equivalent to soy protein which is equal to meat, milk and eggs/cotton. It's high in magnesium, which is good for the heart and the nerves. And three grams of oatmeal is enough to provide the required fiber for good health, thin set directly on the cholesterol controlling mechanism of the body by lowering LDL (bad cholesterol). If you are not a breakfast person, try this cleansing recipe (ingredients - 3 tbsp pro oats, 1 whole grapefruit, 1 tbsp flax seeds, 1 tbsp chia seeds, 2 tbsp oats, 2 tbsp coconut nectar/honey or regular honey like in blender. Drink up and cleanse your body. Drink should be taken immediately after meals and dinners. A cup of apple cider or 2 capsules twice daily can really control your sugar.

Exercise—It's the supreme duty of any form of exercise in order to burn or prepare the sugar inside your body. Note: It must be burned. If not, it will be stored in your liver as unused energy. Every time you use dessert, progress it in your head that you must compensate this with exercise. Before you put your head on the pillow every day as a rule, subscribe to take sweets or you like only will you lose weight, you will also feel better.

Q: How do I manage overindulging on food and alcohol during the holidays?

You can party-hop without overdoing it. The trick is to simply eat in moderation. If you're hungry, eat a healthy snack before dinner. If has been successfully done before by others. So why can't you? Never drink alcoholic beverage on an empty stomach. This could lead to others one day soon.

Allison Today: "If I can think it, I can become it."

Love and light!

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Bronze G. Velarde

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Christmas NOEL
WILL RUN UNTIL DEC 23, 2010
WORLD TRADE CENTER METRO MANILA

Eagles tour goes to Asia; no PH date yet

By Pinlado Concepcion

DOLLOP. Forth is performing here next year and so is Justin Bieber, but there's one major international act that Filipinos might miss out when it tours Asia: the classic rock band Eagles.

For sure there's been a deluge of old artists who come here regularly, because there's a big market for them—middle-aged executives and professionals who can well afford to buy tickets even for the whole family.

The only drawback is that some of these stars are not former pot users or partiers.

But the Eagles are a breed apart. The band may have marched to punk in the 1970s, but it has remained current, with a celebrity-rare album, 2007's "Long Road Out of Eden," that has topped the charts and seven new Grammy awards.

This is the same album which the band is promoting with its ongoing tour.

Next year the tour rolls to Bangkok (Feb. 22), Singapore (Feb. 25), Taipei (Feb. 28), Osaka (March 1), Nagoya (March 3), Tokyo (March 5 and 6) and Hong Kong (March 10).

"With that schedule," a music fanatic friend said, "it makes sense if local promoters add a Manila date."

But friend actually watched the band live when its own manila stop in Spain last year. "Great show!" he enrolled. "Mind you, it was not an unplugged set, but it felt classic rock."

It's not that no promoter is interested in the Eagles. It's

GLENN Frey and Don Henley

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The Perfect Gift All Year Round

Mariah expects twins

NEW YORK – Grammy Award winning singer Mariah Carey is expecting twins, her husband Nick Cannon told a US radio show on Thursday.

Cannon said on the 92.3 New radio show that Carey first told President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama about the twins after a recent performance. Carey announced in October she was pregnant.

"She shared with the President and the First lady that we are having twins," the 30-year-old rapper and TV host said, but he did not reveal the sex of each twin. "I honestly was really sorry with I was doing this, so I am probably going to get yelled at for not giving premature.

The couple had declined telling people about the pregnancy and rejected rumor due to a miscarriage Carey suffered two years ago, Cannon said.

A recent ultrasound revealed, "everything is NOR, both babies are healthy so we're happy. We are extremely happy." Cannon said.

Reuters

Eagles tour ...

From page B1

gles, but the main problem is the cost of bringing in the band.

A few years back, Imarm de Guia of Ovation Productions, the company known by promoting most of the foreign classical/pop concerts in the Philippines, said the Eagles would cost him US$1 million—so unsure he demand too expensive.

It para sina,

ounce and prospective punters have also found the lunch-to-rent asking price" too high."

Perhaps what's needed here is a consensus of sensible Pinoys who won't even have to think of seeking a profit to bring in the Eagles. The bottom line is, the losers must not be that high, considering that the less biggest telecom company would at least get the chance to sponsor it.

The Eagles in Manila? That's good enough for cardsc two nights at the Mall of Asia open-air grounds. It'll be good to see Glenn Frey, Don Henley, Timothy Schmit and Joe Walsh in the flesh after all these years.

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THE LEGEND OF MICKY WARD

Pops gets emotional at her party

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

POPS FERNANDEZ got emotional when she gave a thank you message on stage during her birthday bash at The Bistro restaurant. It was an intimate gathering of her closest friends in and out of the biz hosted by Ramon Jan Dargis.

"My point is, many people in our life," Pipoy said. "But only a few stay forever. I have been blessed to have found new friends who have stood by me through thick and thin. And that's all that matters tonight."

It was so touching when the singer-real estate broker-actress and mom-to-be's sported about their friendship. Sweep so emotional that Pipoy, I was moved to tears when she thanked me for being one of her best friends in show biz. Though there's nothing classy like sleeze on the moment of all. She even thanked my mom for being the one who coined the title "Encore Queen" for her.

"Bella, nahulo namin ako with that title," she said to jest. The birthday girl has no other name in her life more special than her twin boys, Robin and Nate, who love her more than any boyfriend ever could. They gamely sang for their proud mom who couldn't stop clapping while her sons were belting it out.

Pipoy Lirel Illustrem, Manila Mayor's, Rachel Salvacion, would sing "That's What Friends Are For." No other song could best describe our friendship. When people often say that I have a ranking resemblance to Pipoy, I take the similarity it not just physical.

When I look at Pipoy, I see the kind of woman I want to be. She have so many possibilities as our colorful love life and single motherhood, knowing that we look out for each other gives me all the strength I never thought I could have.

Happy birthday, my beloved Pipoy! You are the sun total of all your memories and memories. Thanks for making me part of your life and changing mine for the better.

POPS Fernandez

Hazy remarks

Does a TV host-actor have ill feelings towards a director-actor? In his show some years back, he made a remark concerning about Erik's project. THIS is at it again, he lambasted Dirk Lanza project on his current show. Could he just be envious of Dirk good books because THIS is a frustrated director? Or is he busy making money to be bash-ing? Is THIS supposed to be Lights, camera, intrigue? Call us in, Dirk!

New album

My Dance friend Ivy Fu comes to town for her concert and recording. Her first album was a huge success. One hit duet-ess medley to the tune DJ of KIA Silva PM has released his second album under Sony Music Philippines.

"Wow! I almost "This a celebrity s bigger and better collection," he beams, "and my original song 'Time Magazine?' sounds current and hi-tech."

It includes Lea Salonga's "If You've Ever Been By My Side," Sharon Cuneta and Kuh Ledesma's new version of "Needin Ako," Andy Aces Bustos and Ryan Agoncillo's "I'll Have To Say I Love You in a Song" and IU Tzuyu

Taylor Swift back on top overall chart

THE TOP-SELLING albums in the country for the week of Dec. 6-12, based on Odyssey Music & Video's nationwide sales report:

Overall

1) Taylor Swift, "Speak Now" (Deluxe Edition), MCA Music; 2) Regine Velasquez, "Fearless," Universal Records; 3) Jose Baldivieso, "I'd Do Anything For Love," Star Records; 4) Jose Baldivieso, "Faithfully," Star Records; 5) Various Artists, "Papuring Pasikong Magsinungaling," Star Records; 6) Aiza Seguerra, "My World: The Collection," MCA Music; 7) Various Artists, "Best Hop Pilipino Christmas Medley: Aasing Sori," AMD Music; 8) Gloc-Cast, "Silver The Music, Vol. 4," Ivory Music; 9) Jose Mari Chan, "Christmas In Our Hearts," International Records; 10) Various Artists, "The Magic Of David Foster & Friends," Warner Music

OPM

1) Regine Velasquez, "Fearless," Universal Records; 2) Jose Baldivieso, I'd Do Anything For Love," Star Records; 3) Jose Baldivieso, "Faithfully," Star Records; 4) Various Artists, "Papuring Pasikong Magsinungaling," Star Records; 5) Various Artists, "Best Hop Pilipino Christmas Medley: Aasing Sori," AMD Music; 6) Aiza Seguerra, "My World: The Collection," MCA Music; 7) Various Artists, "Best Hop Pilipino Christmas Medley: Aasing Sori," AMD Music; 8) Gloc-Cast, "Silver The Music, Vol. 4," Ivory Music; 9) Jose Mari Chan, "Christmas In Our Hearts," International Records; 10) Various Artists, "The Magic Of David Foster & Friends," Warner Music

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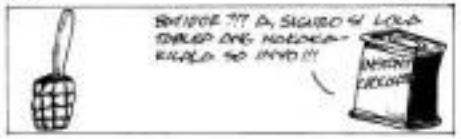

Laging nakatulog ng madaling-araw sa Grade 6 ang mga bata. Lunes hanggang Biyernes.

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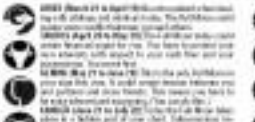
BY FRANCES CORAZON



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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more puzzles and programs, see www.sudoku.com

Conceptis Sudoku — By Dave Green

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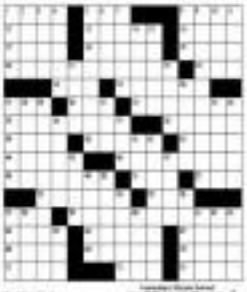

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